



The Search for the Talisman

A Tale of Adventure in Labrador

BY

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"A Cruise in Cloudland" &c.

WITH FOUR FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS
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CONTENTS.

CHAP.	Page
I. How four Cousins met, and what came of their Meeting,	9
II. The Cricket-match—Bob's Triumph—A Shadow,	14
III. Holiday Amusements—The Otter Hunt—The Drive— Bad News—A tender Parting,	21
IV. Uncle John's Will—Preparations and Discussions—De- parture—An unexpected Telegram,	29
V. On Board—The mysterious Stranger—Who is he?—The great Conjuror—A Discovery,	39
VI. In Nova Scotia—The <i>Walrus</i> chartered—Preparations for the Voyage—Waiting for a Wind,	49
VII. The Departure for Labrador—The Gut of Canso—Re- pulse of Boarders—A Shot—A beautiful Sight—Bob gets into Trouble,	58
VIII. The Voyage up the Straits—Land Ho!—Bob's Adven- ture with the Anks—The Icebergs,	69
IX. A Run Northwards—A terrible Danger—Angus saves the Schooner—Clear once more,	79
X. An Excursion—A Seal—The Walrus and the Bears— Left on the Ice—Adrift!	88
XI. On the Ice—An Alarm—A terrible Fire—The <i>Annie</i> given up for Lost,	99
XII. A Convulsion—A terrible Prospect—The Migration of the Ice—Bob and Tom go off in search of Adventure,	109
XIII. Tom and Bob make a Tour of Discovery—The Iceberg —The Wolf—Buried Alive—A sad Scene,	120
XIV. Bob's Danger—The "Wolf" is recognized—An unfor- tunate Conclusion—Tom's surmises—Hope!	130
XV. The Esquimaux—A Message and a Reply—On the Berg —A narrow Escape—The Signal-gun,	141

CHAP.	Page
XVI. Rescued from the Iceberg—A Discussion—Off Ungava —Arrival of the Esquimaux Oomiak,	156
XVII. The Huskies come on Board—Their Manners and Customs—Some Kynack Races and Sports—The Captain's Story of the Bear,	167
XVIII. A little Expedition: Tom and the Driver—The Walrus and the Bear—A Run for Bear Life,	179
XIX. An Igloo—A terrible Experience—A dreadful Night—The Igloo is walled up—What's to be Done?	193
XX. A Fix!—The Bear pays a Visit to the Visitors—A tardy Escape—Esquimaux Dogs—The Return,	203
XXI. A Welcome—About Sealing—A White-whale Hunt—A Castaway—A Scare on Board,	214
XXII. The Esquimaux Recovered—Towed by an Iceberg—A knowing Hand—The Captain of the <i>Gannet</i> —Mickey speaks his Mind,	224
XXIII. A Stranger—A Clue to the Talisman—The Trapper—"The Spectre Woodman"—Mischievous Brewing,	238
XXIV. A Discovery—Cecil Self-accused—A Chase—Arthur and the Plover—An Adventure,	248
XXV. Hopodale—The Ship from Europe—Letters from Home—Down the Coast—Esquimaux Bay—Up the River—A tight Place,	256
XXVI. Up the River—Rigolette—The Voyage up—The Search for the "Talisman"—The Sealed Packet—Success,	269
XXVII. Henley Harbour—Curious Rocks—Return to Halifax—Homeward Bound—Back to Bristol—Home Again!—Conclusion,	282

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	Page
THE TRACEYS BIDDING THE ADVENTURERS ADIEU, .	<i>Frontis.</i> 37
"THE GUN EXPLODED, AND THE BEAR FELL MORTALLY HURT," .	97
"OH, TOM, TOM! IT IS VERY HARD TO DIE!"	126
"THE ESQUIMAUX WAS UNQUESTIONABLY ALIVE,"	223

CHAP.	Page
XVI. Rescued from the Iceberg—A Discusion—Off Ungava —Arrival of the Esquimaux Ooniak,	156
XVII. The Huskies come on Board—Their Manners and Customs—Some Kyack Races and Sports—The Captain's Story of the Bear,	167
XVIII. A little Expedition: Tom and the Driver—The Walrus and the Bear—A Ram for Bear Life,	179
XIX. An Igloo—A terrible Experience—A dreadful Night—The Igloo is walled up—What's to be Done?	193
XX. A Fix!—The Bear pays a Visit to the Visitors—A tardy Escape—Esquimaux Dogs—The Return,	203
XXI. A Welcome—About Sealing—A White-whale Hunt—A Castaway—A Scare on Board,	214
XXII. The Esquimaux Recovered—Towed by an Iceberg—A knowing Hand—The Captain of the <i>Gannet</i> —Mickey speaks his Mind,	224
XXIII. A Stranger—A Clue to the Talisman—The Trapper—"The Spectre Woodman"—Mischiefs Brewing,	238
XXIV. A Discovery—Cecil Self-accused—A Chase—Arthur and the Plover—An Adventure,	248
XXV. Hopedale—The Ship from Europe—Letters from Home—Down the Coast—Esquimaux Bay—Up the River—A tight Place,	256
XXVI. Up the River—Rigolette—The Voyage up—The Search for the "Talisman"—The Sealed Packet—Success,	269
XXVII. Henley Harbour—Curious Rocks—Return to Halifax—Homeward Bound—Back to Bristol—Home Again!—Conclusion,	282

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	Page
THE TRACEYS BIDDING THE ADVENTURERS ADIEU,	<i>Frontis.</i> 37
"THE GUN EXPLODED, AND THE BEAR FELL MORTALLY HURT,"	97
"OH, TOM, TOM! IT IS VERY HARD TO DIE!"	126
"THE ESQUIMAUX WAS UNQUESTIONABLY ALIVE,"	223

mother; all jolly? Give us a kiss, Annie, old girl. This *can't* be Edie."

"Yes it is, Tom," replied that young lady, aged nearly fifteen, who gave promise of much beauty—"I'm nearly as tall as you now!"

"Quite the young lady, I declare! She'll cut you out Annie if you don't mind. Well, have Arthur and Bob turned up?"

"Not yet, they will come up by the train from Plymouth. And what do you think, boys?" said Annie.

"Can't think just now. Is the luggage all right, porter?"

"Yes, sir. Beg your pardon, Master Sarcil, but ye be grow'd!"

"Thanks, Mills; so my clothes tell me. I'm getting on; all right, put them up."

The boxes were transferred to the cart that was in readiness, and the young people then entered the carriage which was in waiting.

"Now, Annie, what's the news?" said Cecil. "Don't overwhelm me—are you going to be married? Is that it?"

"Nonsense, Cecil! It's about you and Tom—not about myself."

"Oh then, fire away! Any fun? So long as it doesn't mean 'dentist' I'm ready for anything!"

"Well, then, you and Tom are invited to go over to Penloo."

"To Uncle John's, you mean?"

"Yes, and play in the cricket-match on Tuesday. You are also to stay there after, if you like, papa says."

"Rather! Just a little, eh, Tom? We shall have fine 'larks' with Bob and Arthur. Isn't it jolly, Tom?"

"Splendid!" replied his brother. "You girls won't be there, will you?"

"We are coming to the cricket-match," said Edie. "George and Nellie will be there on Saturday."

"This is the best news we have had for years," said Cecil, a tall, kindly lad, nearly seventeen, an immense favourite with all—"Dear old Nell! What a change from smoky London!"

Thus the conversation proceeded as the carriage continued its way through the heated town of Barnstaple—up Boutport Street, past the Assembly Rooms, and a certain house which "Master Sarcil" well remembered, and so on to Pilton Bridge, and up the hill to the open country. The house, standing on its own grounds, was soon reached, and Mr. and Mrs. Tracey welcomed their boys, as fathers and devoted mothers always welcome affectionate and dutiful boys and girls. The younger children also squeezed themselves in for a kiss. So for a moment or two a confused mass of struggling and embracing humanity was alone visible.

"Oh Cecil!" "Oh Tom!" "Let me tell you." "Let me show you." "Here's 'Lion'—look, he knows you!"

Such were some of the cries that were screamed into the lads' ears as they went upstairs with their mother; while the "pater," pipe in mouth, retired judiciously to his greenhouses with a watering-pot—for Mr. Tracey, a kind, genial gentleman, and a most indulgent father so far as his means permitted, much enjoyed the "pipe of peace" in his garden, of which (the garden, I mean) he was very fond, and in which he daily spent many peaceful hours.

Scarcely had dinner been consumed than the boys were anxious to rush down to the station again to see their cousins, who were expected to arrive about half-past eight, on their way to Bideford. Annie consented to accompany them. So they started for their walk and reached the station in time. The train came in slowly, and at a long distance two heads were visible protruded from the carriage window, with some inconvenience apparently. First one head would be seen above, then underneath the other. Then both would

suddenly disappear, again to appear with hair dishevelled and faces red as if from violent exertion. These heads belonged to Arthur and Robert Wood, the Traceys' cousins.

A regular schoolboys' welcome ensued, in which Miss Tracey took no part, as she was deep in conversation with a young friend of her father's who resided near Barnstaple. The boys only winked at each other when they perceived this, declaring that "Annie was having a nice time,—by accident, of course," they all agreed.

The lads were, however, so interested in the details of the coming cricket-match and the anticipation of meeting on the Tuesday, that Miss Annie escaped chaffing on this occasion. The train would not wait, though, and with promises of meeting on the morrow the lads parted with cheery words and waving of hats.

"Where's your young man, Annie?" asked Tom saucily as they quitted the station. "Very curious he came by that train. It was very kind of you to come down with us, dear," he added; "wasn't it, Cecil?"

"Extremely," replied Cecil. "Isn't he coming up to the house presently, Annie?"

"Yes, of course. Poor Angus; he is on half-pay now—I wish he had a ship."

"Court-ship, eh?" suggested dreadful Tom.

"Tom, hold your tongue directly—how rude you are," cried his sister, "and what nonsense you talk! Angus is a sensible young man, and wants to do something for his living; he hates half-pay."

"So should I," retorted Tom. "Not much merit in that, Annie. Sorry you are annoyed, but—"

"Why does not Uncle John get him employment?" remarked Cecil. "His influence and his Arctic services ought to entitle him to some consideration. I will put in a word for old Angus Fowler if I can. Can't father help him?"

"No," replied Annie with a half sigh; "I wish he could. You are uncle's favourite, Cecil; and Angus is really an excellent officer. They nominated him for the *Alert* the other day, but something or somebody intervened. He has been in the Arctic Regions too."

"Wish I had!" remarked Tom. "What fun to have lots of ice, and unlimited skating and sleighing!"

"Who knows?" said Cecil—"we may some day find ourselves in the Polar Regions! Meantime here we are at Pilton. Do you remember the otter hunt, Annie?"

"Yes, indeed I do; I have the pad still. That was a pleasant morning, and Angus said—"

"Here we are again," interrupted Cecil. "The dear mother is waiting for us. Let's go into the conservatory, as of old, and have a chat. Angus will be all right, Annie," he whispered to her; "never mind Tom."

Miss Tracey said nothing, but she gave her brother a grateful look; and the young people entered the house and afterwards had tea on the little terrace facing the conservatory, in a fashion which was then extremely pleasant and sociable, and of which the memory remains with Angus Fowler unto this day!

But the conversation, and Cecil's subsequent action in connection with Uncle John, had very important consequences, as those who read this tale to the end will perceive. Little did the boys think that within a short time they and Angus Fowler would all be bound for the very Arctic Regions which Tom had so greatly desired to see!

CHAPTER II.

THE CRICKET-MATCH—BOB'S TRIUMPH—A SHADOW.



HE long-wished-for Tuesday morning at last dawned. The sun rose bright and clear, and the boys soon followed his example. There were so many things to be done. Bats, pads, gloves, and the various cricketing implements had to be oiled, cleaned, and generally inspected before breakfast. The girls also rose early. Annie, who was generally late downstairs, on this occasion, as usual when anything like a picnic was afoot, was down in good time, and making herself very useful too. So before Mr. and Mrs. Tracey with the younger girls put in an appearance the arrangements had been pretty well completed.

"Angus is coming to play for us," said Cecil, "and will be here directly after breakfast. Are you coming with us, Annie? If so you must be ready soon."

"I shall be in time—depend upon it," she replied. "I have only to put on my hat, Cecil."

"Yes, I see you have mounted the pink dress," answered Tom. "Our colours are well represented. You are coming, mother, I suppose?"

"Not yet, dear; your father and I will come over later. Edie will, I daresay, accompany you youngsters. Here's Angus."

The boys rushed out to meet the young sailor, who,

apologizing for his early appearance, was dragged into the room.

"Well, Angus, so you are going to do battle for our side?" said Mr. Tracey. "(Tom, do be quiet.) Have you breakfasted?"

"Yes, thank you, sir," said the young man. "I am afraid I am a little early, but—"

"Not a bit too early," remarked Annie. "We must start soon. I will be ready in five minutes."

She quitted the room; and when she returned with a flower in her dress, and a small bit of geranium in her hand for Angus, with some blossoms for her brothers as a kind of "set off" to the pretty geranium, the party started.

They reached Penloo Hall in about an hour, and were disappointed to hear that Uncle John was not very well. He had a cold, the boys said, but otherwise he was all right. Angus said he hoped so, but looked grave; and Annie Tracey went indoors to see her ailing uncle.

The eleven were all mustered in due time. Then arrived the opposing team—some of the players being "actually grown men," as Edie remarked; and before twelve the wickets were pitched and the umpire had called "Play!"

Captain Wood's eleven won the toss and elected to go in on a good wicket. But, horror of horrors! the grown men whom Edith had specified began to bowl with deadly effect. In vain did Cecil practise all his defensive skill, in vain did Angus "block," and "cut" when opportunity offered. The score rose slowly—very slowly!

Arthur made ten; Tom, who went cheerily to the wickets, laughing at the last man out, returned with a "duck's egg," looking like a goose. Annie consoled with him and watched Angus, who was playing steadily and well. Cecil joined him and managed a cut for three, a drive for two, and five singles. Then he was unluckily

bowled off his pad. The curate came in, swiped three successive balls for four each, and was bowled by a "shooter." Angus, not out, made a few more; but the last four wickets fell for only ten runs, and the young sailor carried out his bat for twenty-nine, cheered by the spectators and smiled on by Miss Tracey. Total of the innings, eighty-two.

We need not particularize the visitors' innings. When the luncheon-bell rang they were fifty-five for three wickets, and after lunch they made sixty-nine. Angus and Cecil bowled well, but the men had command of the bowling. The boys' fielding was excellent.

With forty-two runs against them the "Barnstaple Boys," as they called themselves, went again to the wickets with the agreement to play the match out. The good-humoured captain of the visiting team had consented to this suggestion. Mr. and Mrs. Tracey and a lot of other people had by this time arrived, and when Angus with Tom Tracey walked to the wickets they were cheered by the spectators.

"Now, Tom, be steady," said his friend. "I will take the over at the other end. Don't run me or yourself out—play cautiously."

"All right, Angus; I'll take care. I'm always better after some grub," replied Tom.

Angus passed on to the farther wickets. "Play!" called the umpire. The bowler measured the ground with his eye, holding the ball close to his face; a run forward, a swing of the arm; the ball rushed down the wind, pitched well up; and amid a general cry of dismay Angus Fowler was bowled by a "Yorker" for a "duck."

Annie turned quite pale, and jumped up, saying:

"What a horrid ball!—I'm sure it was unfair!"

But it was not. Angus came back looking rather foolish. It was certainly disappointing, after his brilliant first innings, to be bowled first ball in the second.

"Can't be helped, Annie," he said as he sat at her feet on the grass. "Arthur and Tom will do something, I dare say. How is Captain Wood?"

"Not at all well, I am afraid. I asked him about you, and he said he would see about it; so—"

"How kind you are, Miss Tracey! I am sure I am very grateful; and if he does— Well hit! well hit!" he exclaimed suddenly as Tom, having caught a log-ball full on the bound, sent it flying over the fence. "Well hit, Tom!"

"Capital!" assented Annie. "I wonder what uncle will do—if he does anything?"

"You seem doubtful," said the young sailor. "Do you think he will break his promise?"

"No," she replied. "(Is that a 'three?') No, he will not break his word; but I am afraid he is much weaker than they think."

"Indeed!" said Angus sympathetically.

"Yes," continued Annie. "He had all the boys up during lunch-time—did you see? He thinks them rather frivolous and careless, I know; and papa thinks he will tie up his property somehow, even from Arthur and Bob. You know uncle is a little eccentric."

"I have heard as much. He has served abroad a great deal, and the climate—"

"Yes; he was up in the ice for months. You should hear him relate his experiences. He says he left a treasure buried in the snow by a cairn somewhere on the coast near Hudson's Strait, and whoever finds it will find something of the greatest value."

"Really! I wish I had it! Then I would retire from active service and—never mind, I *will* do it some day."

"What?" inquired Annie innocently.

"Marry," replied the young lieutenant, "and the bride will be—"

"Bowled indeed," cried Mr. Tracey, suddenly interrupting the tête-à-tête. "Did you see that, Fowler?"

"No, sir, at least I," stammered Angus. "I—"

"It was splendid; I'm sorry for Tom. He has played well for his runs. How many, Tom?"

"Eighteen," replied Tom. "Beastly ball, father; broke in a 'mile' and took the bails off! That man is too good for us!"

So Tom retired to divest himself of his pads, while the spectators marked the runs, and wondered who would come next.

"Here's Master Sarcil," said Annie, smiling. "Go in and win Cecil!"

"I'll try," he replied. "Tell you what it is, Angus; we *must* lick them! We have not tied them yet; but I feel rather fit just at present. That's one blessing."

The young man, looking remarkably well in his "flannels," walked quickly to his wicket, and hit his first ball for two. Then it was "over," and Arthur had a two and two singles. Cecil's turn came again, and stepping out to the first ball of the over, he drove it for four. The next ball he played. Then came a fine drive right amongst the people by the scoring table; and the next ball was hit in the same place exactly. The fifth delivery was "cut," but was fielded at point, and the "over" was finished.

The spirits of the Barnstaple Boys now rose with the score. "Master Sarcil" was in fine form, and played with great judgment. He hit hard and clean. The field was extended, and "slows" were tried; but he never put one up. He placed the ball with great judgment, and sent it skimming along the ground. Arthur was dismissed by a catch, but the swiping curate came in, and the field was tired out. The bowling was fairly collared, "tied up in knots" as Tom said. At 4.30 P.M. the young team had made 125 for four wickets. But the "tail" was not a strong one.

Nevertheless the sting was taken out of the bowling, and though the whole eleven were out at 159 they

were full of hope. The visitors had now to make one hundred and seventeen to tie; one hundred and eighteen to win, and about an hour and forty minutes of daylight to make them.

"You *must* beat them, Angus," said Miss Tracey. "Remember, Tom, perseverance! You can do a good deal, uncle says, if you would only try. Now try! Arthur, if you care for me you will field like a Grace. —Papa, come and lecture these boys. I am telling them to win. Be brave and steady. Bob, you are too fond of joking and fun in the field!"

"Dear me, Annie, you are getting quite a lecturer. But I'll be steady, never fear. I'm going to bowl, and if I can only get my favourite break-back on the ball, I'll rattle their timbers!"

"Well, go and rattle them then," said Mr. Tracey. "We are all very anxious, I can tell you."

The last innings of the match began. Twelve runs were made for one wicket. Bob had not found his "break" yet; but he was permitted to go on still. The score quickly rose, and the curate went on for Bob for a few overs. Cecil and two other bowlers were tried. The score was ninety-six for five wickets. All hope had gone from Annie, when in reply to a signal from Angus, who was the captain, Bob Wood resumed bowling at 98.

The strangers had now only twenty runs to make, and five wickets to go down. Bob seemed confident though, and his confidence was justified. With his first ball he clean bowled one wicket; and the next man was sent back, without scoring, by the last ball of the same over amid loud cheers.

"Well bowled, Bob!" cried Angus, as he waved his hand to Annie.

Five runs were made in the next two overs. Then four "maidens" were sent down. Then a "bye" gave two runs, and the spectators became tremendously ex-

cited; but to their credit be it said, the "Boys" played up as steadily as ever, and never let a chance pass. Now the curate covered himself with glory by securing a high up left-hand catch in the long field; and a dangerous man retired! There were then only twelve runs wanted to tie!

Great interest attended Bob's next over. He was "cut" for two, and then got his man caught in the slips; ten runs only wanted! Would they be made? Bob was nervous when the last man came in, and his first delivery was nearly wide. Then "over." Three runs were scored; eight more runs to win. Bob began well. Then came a single and a two. Then, with a beautiful ball pitched to a nicety, young Wood removed one bail from the stumps! With a loud shout of triumph Barnstaple ran in victors, cheered to the echo, and warmly congratulated by their older opponents and friends equally.

"All Bob's doing," said Angus. "We owe him the laurels."

"I kept them at *bay* anyway," replied Bob, laughing. "And now I'll trouble you for the claret-cup."

"Who is that, papa?" said Cecil afterwards, as he indicated a new-comer who was about to enter the house. "I've seen him before."

"Dear me, it's Mr. Marston, your uncle's man of business. I'm afraid poor Jack *is* ill. Let me see; let me see."

But Uncle John was no worse, and the party returned to Barnstaple to supper as merry as the day had been long; and all unprepared for the sad news which reached them a few days later.

CHAPTER III.

HOLIDAY AMUSEMENTS—THE OTTER HUNT—THE DRIVE—BAD NEWS—A TENDER PARTING.



It would occupy too much of our time and space to record in detail the many pleasant excursions during that July holiday time. We can only glance at the adventures, the picnics, the boating parties, in which the cousins, with George and Nellie (Mr. Tracey's son-in-law and daughter), and Angus, united. The varied characteristics of the lads came out and afforded much amusement. Tom, the rash and unpersevering; "Master Sarcil," the quiet considerate manly lad; Arthur, somewhat desponding; Bob the careless, joke-loving boy, who never looked ahead—all united with their sisters and friends in taking as much rational enjoyment out of the time as they could get.

Of course they went to Instow, to Saunton Sands, and to contiguous Croyde. Of course they went to Wollocombe, and had tea in the farmhouse, climbed over the rocks, explored Baggy Point, paddled in the crisp sea-waves, and did all that merry youngsters do on such occasions. With Angus, Annie and Nellie wandered about amongst the sand-hills, or sat on the grass above Croyde Bay, chatting of the past days, and of the future when they would be parted! Little did they then think how soon the parting would really come.

Of course the merry party took boats and "drove" up in the rushing tide to Tawstock and Newbridge, where Angus discovered an eel in the mud, and naturally Annie had to help him to see it. Again, on another occasion the boat got stranded on the "Shillies" in the Taw, and so rubbed and scraped ere the full spring-tide released her, that it required all the rowers' skill and firmness to keep her straight. Then with a rush to Tawstock to tea on the bank, and a return by moonlight on the falling tide to Barnstaple again.

We could also tell you how one morning in August the otter hounds met very early at Pilton Bridge and hunted up the Yeo. We could relate the experiences of four people, who, being lazily inclined, hired a trap with an animal of more lazy proclivities still, but of undoubted "blood," to pull them along the road to meet the hounds about 8 A.M. up the river. We could tell you of the wading, plashing, splashing, baying hounds, and the shouting hunters, the prodding with sticks; the tremendous energy expended in jumping into a stream and rushing up a bank, or through a hedge, to see nothing! The patience of Edith and her sister—their reward at last in hearing the bay of the old hound, which announced the finding of the otter. The rush to the bank, the awakening echoes in the valley by the mill, the hurry-skurry, and finally the sight of the poor mangled, dead otter, dragged and soaking and rough, which had been the cause of so much energy and bustle.

"Well," said Tom, "I've never seen an otter killed before, and I don't want to see one again. What does it come to after all?"

"Larks," replied the careless Bob laughing; "gets lazy people out of bed!"

"Oh, does it!" retorted Tom. "How about Angus and George and the girls? They drove, and had a nice breakfast. We didn't. Did we, Master Sarcil?"

"No," answered Cecil. "I say, Edie, there's the master inquiring for you. Here he is."

"For me!" exclaimed Edith. "Good morning!" she added, turning cheerfully to the gentleman, who approached her with a "pad" just cut from the otter. This trophy was gracefully presented, and as gracefully accepted. Edie was much pleased with the attention, and the "pad" is still worn as a brooch.

The hounds were then turned down stream, and the small driving party proceeded homewards at the snail's pace of their splendid animal, in the nondescript species of "buggy" which had been thoughtfully provided. The drive gave occasion for much merriment. The animal required two persons to drive him—one to pull the reins and one to use the whip. Driving by ordinary touch was quite out of the question. The mouth of that horse, except for feeding purposes, was useless; but he probably considered that its first use. The drivers did not!

The mode of progression may be noted as an example unique in the history of driving. After the animal had been induced to start, which was not effected without considerable trouble, and then with a jerk, he proceeded blindly across the road and immediately "tacked" again, notwithstanding the coachman's pull on the opposite rein. Fortunately the road was clear and the danger not great, as the animal scarcely exceeded at full speed a rate of five miles an hour. But to stop him even at this pace required the united efforts of the two girls and the driver, exhausted as all were with laughing. The animal himself winked in a very knowing manner, and seemed to regard the whole affair as a huge joke.

The merriment of the quartette unfortunately received a check when they arrived home. The horse kindly consented to stop at the gate, and the young ladies, with Angus, alighted. George was going to

take the horse back to its proud possessor, for it had only been hired, when Mr. Tracey beckoned to him.

"There is bad news, George," he said. "John Wood is very ill, I am afraid. Will you come with me to Penloo; we can catch the train in fifteen minutes?"

George looked at the horse and shook his head.

"Let us walk," he replied. "I am very sorry to hear this bad news. Poor Uncle Wood! Is he in danger?"

"I am afraid so," said Mr. Tracey. "Let us be off. He has sent for the boys, and they must follow as soon as they return. Come!"

This was a sad ending to a pleasant and happy morning. Angus remained at the house and promised to bring the boys over as quickly as possible, while Mr. Tracey and his son-in-law hurried off to Penloo by the mid-day train.

They found Uncle John quite collected and sensible, but the nurse looked very grave when Mr. Tracey questioned her. Still there was nothing in the invalid's appearance to denote that the great change was at hand. He was calm, but seemed anxious for the arrival of the boys—his sons and nephews.

"Newton," said he (Mr. Tracey's name was Newton), "I have some important matters to speak of, and I must depend on you to see my wishes carried out. You need not go, George," he continued; "you are one of my executors, you know, and what I have to say concerns my will. Listen, Newton. You know as well as I do that Arthur and Robert are difficult lads to deal with. People call me mad sometimes. You have told me I am eccentric. Well, let that pass."

Mr. Tracey here protested against any unkind intention, in speech or in deed, concerning his brother-in-law.

"I am sure I never used the term unkindly, John. I am sure Gertrude and I have always recognized your goodness."

"Yes, yes, but you are right. I am what you call 'eccentric,' and my will may prove the rule of my life. My lads and yours will all benefit by it on certain conditions. I can see that Tom is as rash as my boy Arthur is desponding. Bob is as careless and lively as your dear Cecil is considerate and quick. Is not that so?"

"Yes, quite true," replied George and Mr. Tracey simultaneously.

"Very well. I, being in full possession of my senses, have devised means for giving them all a chance to bring out their best qualities; and more than that, I will do something for Angus Fowler. What do you think of him, Newton?"

"I like him very much. He is a fine young sailor. We all like him extremely."

"Particularly Annie," remarked the old man dryly. "Oh yes, I have eyes and ears too! I am not so eccentric as all that, Newton. I can make allowances, and I will make young Fowler one."

"How good of you, uncle!" said George, but all the time wondering whether this extraordinary man meant a play on the words or not. "Angus ought to be thankful to you."

"Annie asked me to do something for him, the little flirt! I could see she had won his honest regard. I hope she will have the sense to retain it. Now I have in my new will appointed young Fowler to a command."

"To a command, John!" exclaimed Mr. Tracey. "To a ship? Surely not!"

"Yes, to a ship. Though I am not the First Lord of the Admiralty, nor even a Civil Lord—if there is such a thing in the service—I can appoint a commander. I can make a lieutenant on half-pay a captain by purchase of a vessel. This purchase my executors will carry out."

"I confess I cannot follow you, John," said Mr. Tracey, glancing rather uneasily at his son-in-law. "Are you sure—that—"

"You think me mad, I suppose; but you are wrong. I am quite sane, as you will find when my will is read. I am dying—oh yes, I know all about that, Newton. You will, I am sure, be grieved; but I am not long for this world. My wishes must be carried out or none of my fortune will go to your family. My boys and your boys have each something to learn from the others. My idea—my eccentricity is this. Let them travel—see the world—develop their minds and bodies. Read, mark, and learn from nature as well as from books."

"But, John—"

"But, Newton Tracey, do not interrupt me. My wish is that your sons and mine, under proper guidance and care, should go abroad—across the seas—in search of a treasure which I and my old messmates buried on the coast of Labrador many years ago when I was in the Hudson's Bay service."

"Labrador! Why, that's an uninhabited country, or, at any rate, a savage land," cried Mr. Tracey. "Really, John. Treasure in Labrador! I can scarcely consent."

"Then refuse! My lads will go alone—Fowler will remain unemployed—Annie will remain unmarried, for I suppose you cannot afford to keep her and him with a possible family. You will embitter my last moments and spoil the characters of two fine lads."

"My dear John, indeed I will do all you desire; but Labrador is so far, such an out-of-the-way place. Russia is bad enough; but the Esquimaux are awful."

"You can't tell. I have lived amongst them; you have not. I have left with them a TALISMAN, which it will be Fowler's duty to find. He will command MY Arctic Expedition. He will find the treasure if you consent to my wishes. I will do some good with my

money, and if I can bring up by such means, even after my death, four *lads* to be God-fearing, useful, and upright *gentlemen*—then my money *will* do good and a blessing will be upon it. Riches are often snares; but, Newton, mine will be employed, not in dressing, dining, frivolity, and wickedness, but in bringing happiness to my relations and friends."

These "eccentric" sentiments met with the warm approval of Mr. Tracey and George.

"I don't want to build any monument with my wealth, and I do not want my children to squander it. I will endeavour to use it, or have it used, for them to advantage; for travel, for an education in the highest sense, and with Heaven I leave the issue."

"I promise you, sir," said George, "that I will fully and faithfully carry out your wishes in all respects."

"I will also do my part, John," said Mr. Tracey. "Here are the boys," he added, as he glanced out of the window.

"Let them come up. I would bid them farewell while I can do so properly. I will not see them again in this world."

After a while the four lads appeared, rather awe-stricken and solemn, followed by Angus Fowler.

Mr. Wood received them all affectionately, and made to each lad a reference to his peculiar weakness or fault. He cheered Arthur the desponding; he gently admonished Bobby for his love of joking at all seasons; he had nothing but commendation for Cecil, whose high aims he encouraged; while he tried to inculcate perseverance and respect of persons into the rash and sometimes rude Tom Tracey.

The boys all received their lessons in silence mingled with tears. As father and uncle, Mr. Wood had been ever indulgent, and the lads could scarcely realize that the earthly parting had almost come. They all kissed him affectionately as he sank back exhausted by the

severe demand he had made upon his powers, and left him after a while to repose.

The Tracey boys with Angus returned to Pilton. Their father with his nephews remained. Next day Mrs. Tracey and her daughter went over, and one night as loving faces and tender hands watched and waited on him, while Annie gently tended him, the brave adventurous spirit suddenly fled into the night, to find its well-earned rest above the stars, where is no darkness nor sorrow, neither shall there be any more pain.

CHAPTER IV.

UNCLE JOHN'S WILL—PREPARATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS —DEPARTURE—AN UNEXPECTED TELEGRAM.



THE death of Uncle John made quite a gap in the family circle, although at Pilton the circle was really widened. For the young Woods came to the Traceys' house; a sale was ordered at Penloo, and the furniture was disposed of. But before this step had been taken the important will was read after the funeral by Uncle John's man of business. George and his wife remained, of course, and his duties as executor seemed likely to detain him longer. There was a large muster of friends, and when they had departed the family assembled in the dining-room to hear the provisions of the will.

It had been drawn carefully and in due form. However much Mr. Tracey might object in principle, he had no alternative but to carry out the instructions of the testator. After detailing certain legacies and making provision for servants, the document set forth in "lawyer" language which we need not quote, the wishes of the old Arctic navigator, viz:

That a vessel—a suitable vessel for the purpose—was to be found and provisioned. The command was to be offered to Lieutenant Angus Fowler, R.N., on half-pay, and he was to engage under advice to seek

for, and to find if possible, the TALISMAN which had been left on Labrador by Captain John Wood so many years before. On board the ship were to be, in addition to the captain and crew, the two sons and the nephews of the said Captain Wood. They were to search for, and to benefit by the Talisman when they had found it. Failing to find it after two years, during which period they were to explore the Arctic Regions as they pleased—the ship would return to England, where the lads, with experience and self-reliance, were to choose each a profession; the sum of three thousand pounds to be paid to each nephew to enable him to start in life. The sons of the deceased were to divide their father's property in equal shares, and seek employment as they chose. Their characters would by that time be formed.

To Angus Fowler was left the full daily pay, with allowances, of a captain in the navy, so long as he was employed in the expedition. In the event of his not wedding Miss Tracey, which testator believed he wished to do, he was to have the sum of five thousand pounds in addition to an annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds per annum. But if he married Miss Tracey, with her parents' full consent, the said five thousand pounds was to be settled upon her for her life, and the income for her children's benefit after her death, should she not survive her husband.

When the little lawyer had finished he took off his spectacles and said:

"These, gentlemen and ladies, are the wishes of the deceased. My good friend and your beloved relative was eccentric; but I think he had great perception, and a considerable knowledge of human nature. I suppose I may count on the details of the will being faithfully observed? What do Miss Tracey and Mr. Fowler say?"

Miss Tracey said nothing. She had already escaped from the room, and was securely locked in her own chamber at the top of the house, blushing and conferring

with a photograph of Lieutenant Angus Fowler, half-pay, Royal Navy.

But Angus bravely answered that he would undertake the search for the great Talisman with pleasure and determination. He hoped to bring it back and claim Miss Tracey's hand, if her parents would permit.

Mr. and Mrs. Tracey made no objection. They had always liked Angus. They had not put any check upon his intimacy with their household, and were not so *very* much surprised as perhaps Annie had fancied they would be. She and Angus quite understood each other, although no formal proposal had been made to the young lady.

The boys were delighted at the prospect. To go upon a tour of discovery in the Arctic Regions was a festive treat which they had often fancied as a wild dream; but its fulfilment never entered their heads.

"I say," whispered Tom, "I say, Arthur, won't it be splendid? Bears, reindeer, and icebergs mountains high. Aurora borealis, and all kinds of funny things."

"Yes," replied Arthur, "that is one side of your picture, Tommy. Frost-bites, wolves, oil to drink, snow travelling in sleighs, bitter discomfort. I wonder whether the Talisman has lasted all this time!"

"Of course," replied Bob. "The poor father would never have sent us on such a hunt else; anyway it is the *most jolliest*, the very most *delightfulest* idea that ever I heard. What *immense* larks, what *awful* spees we shall have! 'A Winter in the Ice,' by Jules Verne, will be nothing to ours. He never was there. We shall be there, *all* there, rather."

"Well, Cecil, what do you think of all this most extraordinary will? Are you ready to go in search of the Talisman?"

"I am," replied Cecil. "And Angus, old boy, I am glad about Annie. I never fancied there was anything *really*—well, really serious between you and her. I

won't congratulate her any more than I will you. She is all right, I suppose?"

"I trust and hope she loves me, Cecil. I believe she does so, truly. She seems——"

"Oh, don't mind *seems*—make sure! We shall all welcome 'brother' Angus."

"Thanks a thousand times, Cecil! You are a regular trump. But when must we see about our voyage?"

"As soon as we can, I presume. We should start in the spring. Don't all Arctic men start in the spring?"

"Yes, but an idea has occurred to me. Cannot we go to America in the transatlantic steamer, and find a ship for ourselves in the States, or in Nova Scotia, or somewhere? We shall by those means get a seasoned captain and crew, a tough little boat, not a great vessel to navigate across and sell at a loss after. What do you think?"

"We will have a consultation. The idea seems excellent and most feasible. Well, Bob, so our Arctic adventures will be a reality."

"Oh, yes, Cecil, it will be *delicious*. We shall live in Esquimaux huts, and hunt; eh, Angus? I want to kill a bear—a nice, big, white bear; and I've read of blue and white foxes—run animals, blue foxes!—Blue with cold, perhaps, Angus."

"I think not," he replied. "But the fur is very valuable. The Empress of Russia's cloak, which I have seen—I mean the fox-fur cloak—is valued at more than three thousand pounds sterling."

"Jolly!" cried Tom. "We may get *further* and fare worse."

"Don't make bad puns, Tom," said Bob.

"I don't," replied the lad. "Fur there is a proper pun, you jealous joker. Bah!"

"You deserve a hide-ing for your fur-fetched chatter," retorted Bob. "You'll look as blue as the fox if you go on like that."

"Shall we bring home any, Angus?"

"I will endeavour to carry back a few furs," he replied. "Your mother and sister will like them."

"I'll bring a seal-skin for Edith," said Arthur, "if I can find one."

"I'll bring a stuffed white bear," said Bob.

"I'll bring a silver fox," exclaimed Tom, "a tame one."

"I'll bring a wapiti," said Cecil—"a great elk."

"And I'll bring the TALISMAN," said Angus, smiling.

"I declare I forgot all about the Talisman," said Bob. "That is rather important."

"Rather! I should just think so," said Arthur.

"But we shall never find it, you may be certain. Nor is it likely that any Talisman or—by the by, what is a Talisman?"

"It's a book," remarked Tom boldly.

They all laughed at him loudly. "A book!"

"Yes, it is," said the boy, flushing. "I read it last year. It's about the Crusades. There!"

"But not *our* Talisman, Tom," said Angus. "You are right in saying the name was given to the romance; but a talisman is a charm—something which is supposed to have magical or wonderful properties."

"Don't care for magic," said Arthur.

"Your uncle called the amulet or case he buried or left on the coast a *talisman* in a more general sense. It is something certainly which you will do well to find," said Mr. Tracey.

"Do you know what it is, father?" inquired Cecil.

"No, my boy, I do not. I know it will be worth finding, and will, if properly treated or regarded, bring endless good fortune and happiness. So much your uncle assured me."

"It's a magic ring or a magic stone. Do you remember the '*Old Gentleman's Teetotum*' in Blackwood's Tales? Perhaps our talisman will turn us each into somebody else too."

"Oh, I say," cried Tom, "that would be awkward! Suppose I were turned into a blue fox—why—"

"You'd be in a *blue funk*, I should say," laughed Bob slangily. "We might shoot you and bring you home as a fur tippet for Annie or Edie! Dear me! Nothing left of Tom but his hair!"

The others all laughed at merry Bob. He regarded life generally from the standpoint of "larks," as he denominated all kinds of amusement. Lessons he despised, and spoke of loosely as "rot"—an inelegant term of reproach. But games, shooting or riding, and sailing, were all pleasures grouped generally under the heading of "larks."

So the prospect of bringing Tom home as a "blue fox" amused him, for Bob was easily amused by anything which had a ridiculous side to it. Dear old Tom! We have had many a laugh together in the old days. Heaven bless your sunny face!

"What cheer?" cried George, as, followed by his wife, he returned to the dining-room after teasing Annie; "what cheer, Edie? Well, boys, have you settled your plans?"

"We are talking about them," said Angus. "I suggested going to America in the spring and finding a boat there."

"And a capital idea too! I would go with you myself, only—"

"Oh, do come, George," exclaimed the boys in chorus. George was a great favourite.

"I would go, lads, only this old wife of mine won't let me. She's a regular tyrant, Angus, my boy. You had better mind what you are about if you marry Annie. My experience ought to be a warning. Now let me tell you, mother—"

"Nellie does not half keep you in order, George," remarked Mrs. Tracey, looking fondly at her eldest daughter. Then Angus was suddenly seized with an

idea, and hurried into the drawing-room, where, seated at the piano, he found Miss Tracey—alone!

The terrible warning uttered by George had no apparent effect upon Angus, for when, an hour later, George and his wife sauntered into the drawing-room, the young sailor and Annie were seated hand in hand, and looking most curiously happy. The terms of the will were being closely followed evidently.

"I see you have not taken my advice," said George. "I tried to put him off, Annie, by holding up Nell as a warning. Well, Angus, old fellow, I congratulate you."

George then kissed his sister-in-law, and his wife followed suit most affectionately. And there, in their happiness, we will leave the four generous hearts, and proceed with the details of the great expedition in search of the TALISMAN.

The note of preparation once sounded, the lads answered willingly to the call. Friends in the neighbourhood at Fremington, Instow, and Bideford came in, and the Traceys had a succession of visitors. The engagement was canvassed, the "insane expedition" ridiculed; but, nevertheless, the executors were at work forwarding the clear but only imperfectly-comprehended intentions of the late Captain Wood.

Autumn came; the Fair time passed; the dances in the Assembly Rooms grew fewer; Christmas arrived; and in March the young people would have gone. There was a "jolly party" at the Traceys' house, and everyone seemed to enjoy himself or herself thoroughly. But all the time the question propounded so lightly by Bob, "I say, where shall we be next Christmas?" remained unanswered, and lingered long in burning words in the hearts of the Tracey family.

Christmas passed, and Easter was fast approaching. Preparations were made by all during January and

February. Mr. and Mrs. Tracey went up to London, with their eldest daughter, shopping. Angus was also in London, but Annie remained at Pilton to keep house for the children.

The boys took these preparations according to their respective temperaments, but all enjoyed themselves. Cecil and Arthur were quiet and rather subdued, while Tom and Bob simply revelled in volumes of Arctic adventure and the narratives of explorers. Cecil read; but he read for geographical knowledge and topographical information. He studied the reports of the people of those regions; and Arthur, by some undiscovered means, found a volume which told him many words in the Esquimaux tongue.

Bob and Tom purchased a Newfoundland dog, and trained him to all sorts of tricks. Fortunately there was some little snow that winter, and the lads educated the animal under circumstances as nearly as possible corresponding to those they expected to encounter. The teaching went on until Mrs. Tracey discovered "Baby" in a sleigh drawn by Neptune scampering down the frozen road. Then the experiments were discontinued, and Neptune was left behind after all.

The time now drew terribly near, and the household at Pilton was pervaded by a settled gloom. The girls were frequently found in tears. Mrs. Tracey made no secret of her distress: but Annie kept a smiling face although her eyes and heart were heavy. They called her "hard," those boys; but she had a sore trial to endure. Poor Annie!

Mr. and Mrs. Tracey with Annie accompanied the boys and Angus to Liverpool. It was a cold rainy day. The east wind blew strongly and chilled the most lively. All the party were silent. They had tried to chat and failed. Even Tom was quiet. Annie and Angus were supremely miserable, and the "larks" which Bob had been expecting were absent—or

perhaps only to be found in the fields alongside the line.

Liverpool was reached in gloom and rain. Is it *always* raining in Liverpool? I have often been there, but I can never recall a fine day—a really fine day—in Liverpool. It generally begins to rain (when I am approaching the city) some ten miles off, and the weather begins to clear just before my departure. So I ask, does it *always* rain in Liverpool?

The next day after the arrival of our travellers the great transatlantic steamer started on her voyage. One of the Allan steamers—bound for Halifax, Nova Scotia—carried Angus and his young companions away from England, and home, and *beauty*, to the strange land where so much had to be done ere they returned,—if they ever did return.

The tender left the steamer. Tears clouded the view. A waving of hats and caps, some cheers, and then anguish. Westward ho!

Mr. and Mrs. Tracey went back to the hotel in sorrow, feeling as if they had parted with their dear lads for ever. But Mr. Tracey attempted to cheer his wife, and they were chatting about the future, when a telegram was brought in.

It was from George Hamilton, dated Euston, 8 A.M., and was as follows:—

"Found papers most important to Angus in your box—am following this with Nell. Wait till I come."

"Why did not this reach me sooner?" exclaimed Mr. Tracey angrily. "It was sent out at 10.40."

"We thought you had gone, sir, and it was left at the bar," replied the waiter. "Very sorry, sir."

"It is most important," cried Mr. Tracey. "What can we do, Gertie?" he said, turning to his wife. "The ship has sailed. It is one o'clock. George will arrive soon. What time is the seven o'clock train from London due, waiter?"

"7.15, sir; due 12.25," replied the waiter accurately.

"We must wait, then, till George and Nellie arrive," said Mrs. Tracey. "I wonder what is the matter, and what George has found!"

"Where is Annie?" asked her father.

"In her room, packing up," replied Mrs. Tracey.

"You had better tell her to come to lunch if she can manage it, and that George is expected. We will see then what can be done. It is most awkward. What *can* it be?"

Meantime the Allan steamer was running down the coast—"Westward ho!"

CHAPTER V.

ON BOARD—THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER—WHO IS HE?
THE GREAT CONJURER—A DISCOVERY.



ESTWARD HO!" echoed the boys as with tearful eyes they watched the Welsh coast disappearing gradually to windward.

"Has quite a home sound, hasn't it?" remarked Angus, with an attempt at cheerfulness as he recalled a certain afternoon when he had strolled with the Traceys across the burrows from Appledore to Charles Kingsley's favourite haunts.

This observation set the boys thinking of Barnstaple and its associations; but the dinner summons soon put their ideas into a new channel, and they became more cheerful as the meal proceeded.

The vessel made way rapidly, and in about seventeen hours she lay off Queenstown. There the mails came out to her in a small steamer which rolled heavily in the Atlantic swell; but the huge liner rode steadily and did not condescend to pitch at all on such a puny sea.

had enough of the sea. One man was leaning almost against the funnel, to hide himself apparently.

"A fugitive; see how he screens himself!" remarked Angus.

"A Fenian, I daresay," suggested Cecil.

"Perhaps he is a murderer," whispered Arthur. "I hope he will not take it into his head to practise on board."

"He certainly looks ashamed of himself. Did you ever see such a fellow? If I were the captain I would send him back," said Tom.

"He's flying from justice: I suspect he's a forger," muttered Bob. "He's muffled up so that no one may recognize him."

The individual thus scrutinized and commented upon certainly gave cause for some suspicion. He had kept carefully out of sight of the steamer's passengers as much as possible, hiding in the muffled security of an immense ulster coat his form and features. The hood of the garment effectually covered his face, and made him look like a "monk of old" on his travels. He kept his handkerchief to his mouth, so that none of those on board the steamer should recognize him.

"There's something about that man," said Angus, "that strikes me particularly. I have a presentiment that we are somehow to be associated with him. I am not superstitious, Cecil, but I can't help thinking we either have met or are destined to meet him; I hope not."

"I don't much like his appearance," replied Cecil. "He looks up in such a suspicious way. There, see how he stares at us. Of course he cannot have anything to do with us, but—"

"Who is that fellow?" cried Tom suddenly. "I am certain I have seen him somewhere."

"Angus thinks he may be in some way connected with our expedition—very odd."

"An old man of the sea," said Arthur; "a kind of horrible 'Flying Dutchman,' or his mate. Perhaps he is not mortal. Is it possible that he could wreck us?"

"Ugh!" shuddered the usually careless Bob. "Don't talk like that. He has vanished, Arthur," continued the lad with some animation. "He has vanished completely!"

"So he has," replied Angus after a pause in which he in vain endeavoured to detect the mysterious stranger amid the crowd of people collected to receive the new-comers on deck. "He has disappeared curiously, I must say."

"I don't like this," remarked Arthur the timid. "Do you think there is anything wrong, Angus? Shall we tell the captain?"

But Angus had hurried away to intrust a letter for Miss Tracey to the mail agent, who promised to forward it with other last words from the outward-bound steamer. So Arthur received no reply, and remained puzzled.

The other passengers, however, made no particular remarks concerning the new arrival, and the boys were obliged to wait until the next meal to satisfy their curiosity. But by the time luncheon was ready some of the passengers were not ready for it. A stiff sou'-west wind had sprung up and the heavy rollers had already given warning of some unpleasant hours before the "sea-legs" of the landsmen could be found.

Angus of course paced the deck quite indifferent to the sea, and as a favour he was even permitted to stand "upon the bridge at midnight" with the captain, a privilege reserved for particular friends only. The four boys succumbed to sea-sickness for some days, and when they inquired concerning the "mysterious stranger" the report always was:

"He has not turned out yet."

The remaining time on board the Allan steamer

passed in the usual way. When the weather was not too boisterous there were amusements, in the evening a concert, and one night the "mysterious stranger" appeared. He had grown his beard somewhat longer, and he seemed restless, but not so shy. He seldom spoke in the boys' hearing, so they had no opportunity to study him or to converse with him.

On that particular evening the captain had suggested a conjuring entertainment, at which one of his officers excelled. This gentleman was very clever and manipulated cards and many other things with much dexterity. When he had finished he introduced the "mysterious stranger" to the passengers as a teller of fortunes.

Some asked him questions and were answered in a manner that quite surprised them. At length Angus, who disdained all these so-called "occult sciences," determined to brave the stranger and expose his silliness as he called it.

The Mysterious Individual was behind a curtain, through the opening in which those wishing to have their fortunes told put their hands. Angus, after whispering to his young companions, advanced, in the presence of a number of the passengers, to the curtain, and defied the Mysterious Stranger to tell him anything.

"May I say what I see without fear or favour?" inquired the stranger in a deep voice which trembled with suppressed emotion.

"You may," replied Angus; "I have nothing to conceal. Go on."

Then after a pause the stranger said:

"You are bound upon a long and painful journey. You are in search of an object which gained will bring you happiness. In snow and ice, in storm and tempest, in weal and woe, in danger and difficulty, you will seek your object—a powerful Talisman. Beware

a black man—a negro—who will cross your path. Be resolute, and you, with your companions, will return to celebrate the wedding to which you have already pledged yourself!"

"My goodness!" exclaimed Angus. "Are you serious? Do you know me and my errand?"

"I do," replied the stranger. "You and your young charges must beware! But you will eventually succeed. I see in the dim future the cairn, the hut beside it, on the icy coast. I see beneath the ground the Talisman. Seek the place where the hills form a crescent across the sky, and near where a huge ice-pillar rests unmelted by the summer sun."

Angus was quite pale by this time. The boys and the other passengers assembled were listening intently in the greatest surprise. The young sailor was greatly puzzled.

"Go on," he said at last; "this can scarcely be guess-work."

"It is certainty," replied the deep voice. "Beyond the Esquimaux, near Hudson's Strait—not the Arctic Seas—you will find your object. Search for the ice-pinnacle between the dipping hills, there you will find the cairn and its contents. Trouble is before you, but you will find a helper when you least expect him. Shall I tell you more?"

"Shall we succeed?" inquired Angus in a low voice.

"I cannot tell for certain—I may venture Yes. Your life is long, your heart is good and kind, you are firm and steady. Go on and prosper. The sun-mist obscures the seer's vision, but he sees no death, only trouble and disappointment. Yes, I think you will succeed, and return to your love in sunny Devonshire!"

"Are you a man or a magician?" cried Angus suddenly, dashing aside the curtain. "I *will* be answered. Who are you?"

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"Forbear, rash man!" replied the sage. "Touch not the seer, lest you receive punishment. Angus Fowler, remember your Talisman and sweet Annie Tracey. Farewell!"

With a sudden movement the mysterious stranger pulled the curtain close. Angus endeavoured to part the folds, but they were firmly held. Suddenly they were loosed, and Angus found himself face to face with familiar features wearing a cool smile of amusement.

The lieutenant started back as if he had received an electric shock. Several of the audience came up thinking he was taken suddenly ill and was about to fall. But he recovered himself quickly. The boys ran up to him and stared at the shaven calm face and half-provoking smile of the "Mysterious Stranger," a stranger no longer.

"GEORGE!" they exclaimed, "GEORGE! oh, how *did* you come here? Is it possible you are coming with us? Tell us; quick!"

"George Hamilton!" said Angus, shaking his friend's hand. "George, I shall never forgive you. You startled me, I can tell you. You old humbug, how did you get here?"

By this time they were all in the middle of the saloon grasping his hands and arms; each had eager to hold to "dear old George," whose good-nature and slightly sarcastic remarks seemed—only seemed—at variance, for he concealed much deep feeling beneath a careless, and even sometimes a "cross" demeanour. "His bark," said Tom, "was 'much worse than his bite,' but George never bites in earnest. It is only his play!"

The whole party quickly adjourned to George's state-room, which was at that time unoccupied by any stranger.

"Now, George," cried Cecil, "tell us all about this wonderful flight of yours. How and when did you get away? Are they all well?"

"Perfectly," replied George. "Annie sent you this, Angus," he continued, handing him a letter. "Nell and the children sent all kinds of love and messages, boys—and now for my story. That letter will keep, Angus; you had better listen to me. My narrative is of much greater importance."

Angus did not think so, but he folded up the letter until he had an opportunity to read it privately.

"Well, George, go ahead," he said; "we are all attention, and full of expectation."

George Hamilton seated himself on the upper berth, dangled his legs over, and began as follows:—

"You know when your father came up to us, Cecil, he left a box with me, which had belonged to your uncle. We fancied we had found all particulars concerning the *Talisman* in the tin case at Penloo, but we had not, it seems. The very night before you were to sail from Liverpool Nell and I got hold of this box and began to overhaul the papers with a view to their arrangement, and in an envelope, stained, but quite perfect, we found a piece of parchment.

"Nell was glancing at this, and cried out to me something about the *Talisman*. I took the parchment, and perceived at once that it contained a memorandum, a detailed description of the place in which the *Talisman* must be sought. This seemed to me so important that I made up my mind to go to Liverpool. I actually packed a portmanteau and drove to Euston, but owing to a break-down lost the train. I returned and told Nell to get ready to start by the mail next morning and consult with you. I imagined your steamer did not leave until three P.M. But it started at eleven it appears."

"Yes, about eleven," remarked Cecil.

"We at once drove to the hotel, and found your people just sitting down to luncheon. I told them all, and when they saw the papers they agreed they were

very important and might save much time. But how were you to get them? Then I volunteered to hurry across to Queenstown and catch the steamer there; and after some consultation with Nell and Annie, Angus, I decided, for the fun of the thing, to run over the pond with you all, and see you safely off on your picnic to Labrador.

"So," concluded George dryly, "that is the great mystery. I determined to surprise you the first day, but I was so ill all the week I could not! Then I planned a little surprise, Angus, and I rather think I did it well."

"Indeed you did!" replied the lieutenant. "I was never more taken aback in my life."

"We thought you stared at us rather when you came on board; and we put you down as a Fenian," said Tom laughing.

"Thank you, Master Tom. I will remember you!" replied George.

"You were so muffled up, I said that you might be a forger," said Bob mischievously.

"Indeed! you were complimentary. I will also owe you one, Bob. Well, Arthur, what did you think I was?"

"A murderer, George; but you looked so unlike yourself—"

"Thank you, my boy; you have got out of it very nicely! I will not kill you this time. Cecil only fancied me a dangerous lunatic, I suppose?"

"I think I, not Tom, said you were the Fenian," he replied; "but we all agreed you were a desperate character flying from your native land, and wishing to seek—what do you call it?—oblivion in the Far West."

"Nellie will be delighted when she hears her friends' opinions. My disguise rather attracted attention then?"

"Yes, indeed; we thought the captain would put you

on shore again. You certainly looked a suspicious character," replied Angus.

"Well, now," said George, "we have five days more together at sea, and perhaps a month on land. But we had better study this chart and the landmarks, make three copies of the scroll, and endeavour to find the place on the map. So when Angus has read his letter he can join us in the saloon, and we will begin our arrangements."

"I wish you would come with us, George," said Cecil. "It would be a grand thing! Then we should be sure to succeed."

"Annie did ask me to do so," replied George. "She fancied you would be safer in my company! But the time cannot be wasted. My partner is grumbling already, I daresay."

"Let him grumble!" said Bob.

"You *must* come, George," said Tom.

"I believe he is coming all the time," remarked Bob. "I see the twinkle in his eye!"

"No such luck," said Arthur moodily. "Of course he can't come, Bob; think of Nellie. She will be all alone!"

"That could be managed, I daresay," said George; "and as my company will, I flatter myself, be acceptable; and moreover, as I think I can indirectly shorten the time by my assistance and documents, I have arranged matters, and will remain with you if necessary."

"Hurrah, hurrah!" exclaimed all the younger boys. "Splendid! Hurrah, Cecil, can't you?"

"I am delighted," replied the young man. "This is really kind of you and Nellie. Angus will be absolutely frantic!"

At that moment Angus appeared, and the lads, quite forgetting their manners, proceeded to execute a "bear-dance" around him with such effect as to drive an

elderly single lady to her cabin, intent on complaining of certain young "cubs" to the captain at the first opportunity.

Angus was immensely pleased at the idea of George accompanying the expedition.

"Your parchments quite account for one part of your fortune-telling, I perceive," remarked the sailor. "You completely mystified me, George.—Now, boys, quiet, or go on deck! We can't have such a disturbance. You have alarmed that old lady already, and scared her handmaiden to death."

"To her *berth*, you mean, Angus," retorted Bob. "She has bolted to her cabin."

"Quiet, you horrible boy!" exclaimed George laughing. "Now, come, let us put our heads together over this parchment, and see what we can do to fix the locality of our wonderful Talisman."

CHAPTER VI.

IN NOVA SCOTIA—THE "WALRUS" CHARTERED—PREPARATIONS FOR THE VOYAGE—WAITING FOR A WIND.



HE intentions of the young men and their "wild-goose chase" of the *Talisman*, or hidden treasure as the sailors regarded it, got quickly known on board the steamer; and the captain talked to Angus Fowler on the subject.

"I'll land you at Halifax," he said, "and you will soon pick up a schooner that will carry you. There are sealers or cod-fishers to be found there; but if you can't find one to suit you, try Portland, or may be St. John's."

So the party decided to land at Halifax. Many people came and offered advice, which was listened to; but neither were warnings wanting. Tales of Arctic adventure were related by passengers, and the unknown character of Labrador insisted on.

"We must go farther north than that," remarked Angus. "I fancy our destination is the land to the north of Hudson's Strait, about 68° lat. But the latitude is rather vaguely indicated. The landmarks are clear enough—on paper!"

"And do you suppose you will find landmarks just the same as when your old uncle was up there with M'Clure? Ah, is it likely? I believe he has been humbugging you," said the second officer.

"You are very rash to venture early in the year," said another.

"We do not intend to start until June," remarked Angus; "and I have been in the Arctic seas before, remember."

"Well, we wish you luck," said the mate, "but to my mind you are too venturesome. Time will show!"

"Time *will* show," replied Angus, for he fancied the boys were feeling rather damped in their enthusiasm by these well-meant warnings. "I am convinced the old sailor had an object in view. He would scarcely have sent us out on such a chase for nothing."

"We shall see," was the answer. Then the mate went forward, and the subject dropped. Three days afterwards the vessel came in sight of Halifax, and the party quitted the steamer one fine afternoon, accompanied by the good wishes of the officers and crew of the *Caspian*.

"There is no mistake about our being on the track now," said Arthur. "We are in America at last!"

"By no means," replied Cecil. "This is only Halifax, Nova Scotia, inhabited by those whom Sam Slick called 'Blue-noses.'"

"As soon as we are settled," said Angus, "we must begin to make inquiries concerning our vessel. We will shake down here, and to-morrow our real difficulties will commence."

"Look here, Angus," cried Bob. "Here's Dartmouth and Windsor, Falmouth and Truro, all on the map. It sounds quite like home."

"Yes, and Chester, Liverpool, and Yarmouth," added Tom. "I wish we could see all these places."

"We have more serious business on hand," remarked Cecil. "Let me see if there is any advertisement in the newspaper about such a vessel as we require."

Three weeks were passed in Halifax, and during

that time the boys found much to amuse and interest them. But as nothing adventurous occurred during their sojourn save a few expeditions in the vicinity, we will not dwell upon the Nova Scotian capital.

Angus took care to make known that he required a schooner to make a little voyage so far up as Hudson Strait, and in a few days the servant told him and his companions that a Captain Morris wished to see them.

"Let him come in," said Angus. "Now, boys, I believe we shall hear something at last."

The captain entered and stood bluffly up with his hat on.

"Good-day!" he said, addressing Angus but looking at the lads, who stared at him in return; "you were asking for a little cruising craft—wasn't ye?"

"I was," replied Angus. "Have you anything to offer?"

"Well, I don't think I should have come if I hadn't; eh? Can't 'ford to waste time. My name's Morris. I've been sealin', and also on the Banks, fishin'. I've a boat—at your service. Built at Portland—tight's a drum, say?"

"Well, we must see your ship first," said Angus; "what's her tonnage?"

"Nigh on one hundred and fifty tons—schooner-rigged—fitted strong for ice-work; that's her."

"When can we see her? where is she?"

"At the wharf yonder. Heard you were inquiren'; thought I'd come and see. Will ye come along?"

"Yes," replied Angus, "we will. But first about terms. Can we meet on that point?"

"Dessay," replied the American. "Shall I find the crew? Yes? Well, then—say for six men, forty dollars a month each. Hire of ship. How long do you want her for?"

"Can't tell you," replied Angus. "Maybe three or four months—maybe more."

"No more, thank you," replied the sailor. "No winterin' in Arctic latitudes. Is it for business or pleasure, searchin' for relics or amusement?"

"We are in search of something left in a certain place by an old navigator in the neighbourhood of Ungava Bay."

"Oh!" ejaculated the captain. "It isn't wild-geese, I suppose, as you've come after?"

"Wild geese!" exclaimed Cecil; "what do you mean? Do you think we are not likely to succeed?"

"No—you *may*. There's many things done in the Polar Regions that sounds marvellous to people who have never been there. But I'm not the man to alarm you. I know my ship—she knows me; so does Wash, my dog, young gentlemen. We three—me and Wash and the *Walrus*—we'll go anywhere when we're insured."

"Must we insure you then, too?" inquired Angus.

"Certainly. You find wages, stores, and pay for the use of the *Walrus*—as you won't want to go fishin' or sealin'. My vessel is worth about three hundred and fifty dollars for the summer. My pay, if ye want me, will be a hundred a month—and cheap at that."

"Too little," remarked Bob in an undertone of ironical suggestion—"much too modest."

"No, young gentleman, it ain't—it's a fair price. Come and look at the *Walrus*."

Bob, feeling rather abashed, looked at Angus; and the latter consenting, the party, preceded by the captain, proceeded to the harbour, where they found the *Walrus*, looking taut and trim. Wash barked a welcome when the boys came on board, and at once made friends with Bob and Tom.

"Ah, Wash! he knows you've come to sail with me," remarked Captain Morris, rolling a quid of tobacco in his cheek. "That dog is just as sensible as a Christian—bet your life. Say, Wash, where's Minnie?"

Scarcely were the words uttered than Wash darted down the hatchway and into the captain's cabin. Almost immediately a fine cat emerged, and with a spring gained the rigging, where she clung and gazed calmly at her playmate. Wash barked and leaped up on the taffrail to get at her; but puss knew he could not reach her, and she let him bark as he pleased.

"Come away, Wash," said the captain; "let Minnie alone—d'ye hear?"

Wash came and sat down on the deck; then the cat leisurely and carefully descended and leaped on the companion-hatch.

"Good dog!" said Bob, patting Wash.

"Good cat!" said Arthur, approaching the animal, which blinked and purred when stroked.

"Now, what d'ye think of the *Walrus*?" said the captain after a pause, during which Angus had been casting a professional eye over the ship and whispering to George.

"I should like to take a look below," said the lieutenant.

"Well, come along. She ain't fitted for pleasure-sailing, but we can manage to rig up a cabin for you and make all snug if we come to terms. We can have it as a saloon by day and sleeping-room by night."

The young people, with Angus and George, examined the schooner thoroughly, and the captain soon found he had a practical man to deal with. The cooking arrangements were defective, but they could be remedied. There were several other lesser alterations proposed and finally assented to by the captain.

Then came the important question—to go or not to go in the *Walrus*?

"Well, boys, what do you say? You see the accommodation is limited for us all. We must knock up a few bunks; we must put in a few braces to strengthen

her; we shall have to load up with stores, ammunition, and fixings of various kinds. What do you say to the *Walrus*, George?"

"I say yes," replied Hamilton. "I like the ship, and, between ourselves, I like the captain."

"So do I," answered Angus. "Well, Cecil—and all of you—to be or not to be?"

"To be!" they all cried with one accord. "The old *Walrus* for ever! Hurrah for the *Walrus*!"

Three loud cheers brought the captain down again, and sent the cat flying for her life forward. Wash barked a chorus, and preliminaries were settled.

"We have decided to have the schooner, Captain Morris."

"Good!" replied the captain. "Pro-ceed."

"We will agree to your terms, though we think them rather high; but—"

"High! thunder! Why, it's a dead loss for me—a cruel loss. But I'll put up with it—yes, I will. Look here, not only will I sail in this losin' consarn, but I'll pay for the fittin's and provide a cook. It's ruin—ruin absolute and complete; but I'll do it. Seth Morris is not the selfish oyster-scoop you think him. No, sir. I'm a ruined man, but I'm staunch."

"If it's any loss," remarked Cecil simply, "I dare say we can find another vessel. We have no wish to engage you and make you lose by us, captain."

"Sir, I believe you; but I like your pluck. I'll hear the circumstances some day. It ain't a dead loss, ye see," he continued with a wink at Wash—"not altogether a dead loss; so I'll bear it cheerfully. There's the whole matter settled in a coon's jump. I tell ye what I'll do—I'll have a diver to examine the bottom, and not say a word about it in the bill. Franks is our boss diver."

"Is he?" said Tom. "Can he dive down Niagara, I wonder? I've heard of the feat."

"He's done it," replied the captain with a humorous twinkle in his eye and glancing at Angus and George; "he's done it. Not only that, but he's never come up, and was never seen until Captain Walker met him in the Southern Pacific Ocean. 'Why,' says the captain, 'how came you here, Franks? I thought you was drowned.' 'I came right through,' says Franks; 'it was just as short—that Niagara dive was so everlastin' deep.' Franks is a great man!"

The boys looked at each other and laughed. "We sha'n't get much change out of the captain," remarked Bob. "No use trying to chaff *him*."

Then many other details had to be arranged. The stores and ammunition had to be ordered; wood and water had to be found and put on board. Even before these very necessary supplies had been shipped there was carpenter's work to be done, and the enlargement of the cabin to be attended to, and the "kitchen" arrangement to see to. Butter, sugar, beef and pork, with lime-juice; iron utensils, knives, and other articles; with cloth and flannel for barter with the "Huskies," as the captain called the Esquimaux; firearms, such as rifles, fowling-pieces, and revolvers, were also put on board. A small cannon for signalling purposes was mounted and secured on the forecastle. The standing and running rigging was all overhauled, and some portions repaired or renewed.

When the braces and battens had made the vessel extra strong, as the chances of being "nipped" were not few, the lading was commenced. Every day the boys and one of the elders of the party paid a long visit to the *Walrus*, whose name was changed for the voyage to *Annie* out of regard for Miss Tracey. Of course letters were exchanged with the folks at home, and immense budgets of news or "nothings" were sent and received by Annie and Angus.

So the month of May passed quickly away, and June

was already a day or two old when the captain suggested departure.

"If the wind changes we'll go," he said. "Just let us have a nor'-west slant, and I'll up anchor. We must run well to the eastward of Cape Race, for there ull be plenty of fog about the Banks this time of year."

"At last," said Angus, "all is ready—at last! Now, boys, take your farewell of Halifax and civilization for a while. If the wind changes we may be off at any moment."

It was rather an undertaking, George thought, as he remembered home and wife. No doubt Angus also thought of Annie and her home. Angus was really on duty; George had come to assist in looking after the boys, and was, if truth be told, rather sorry he had come. But he would not return alone to England; though, had he only realized the troubles and hardships which he and his companions had in store, he would have thought twice before he sailed in the *Annie*, late the *Walrus*.

The young people were chatting and comparing notes in a quiet way when one of the crew of the vessel came up and told Angus that Captain Morris suggested that they should all sleep on board that evening, as the wind gave signs of shifting.

Then came hurried preparations. Several things which had been put off to the last moment were hastily arranged, and it was quite evening when Angus and his faithful companions quitted their lodgings and made their way down the now familiar thoroughfares to the wharf.

"Well, Tom, what do you think now?" asked Cecil. "Are you satisfied that the search for the Talisman is a fact?"

"I can't believe it is true," replied Tom. "I have pinched myself to ascertain whether I am really awake. I can't believe, or rather cannot realize the fact, that

we are actually going to sail up to Hudson's Strait—perhaps even to Greenland! No, I can't, Cecil."

"Can't what, Tom?" inquired Arthur.

"Can't make this voyage a reality."

"You soon will, then, I can tell you. You'll be jolly sea-sick in a few hours," replied Arthur.

"So will you, that's one consolation. But there's the captain with Wash on the look-out; and the cat. I declare the cat is perched in the cross-trees!"

Wash welcomed the party with much demonstrativeness; the cat preserved the staid demeanour for which she had already received much praise. Captain Morris shook hands with each member of the party, and wished them good evening with much solemnity.

"We will just go below, sir," said he to Angus, "and see that things is fixed."

So they all went below and inspected for the tenth time the bunks, the hammocks, which the younger boys preferred; the galley—the black cook "Pen" or Pennsylvania (a name he had adopted as more sonorous than Black Sam, which had apparently been his previous appellation in New York), and the general arrangements on board the schooner.

"Now," said the captain, "we'll just have one glass apiece for luck, and turn in. If the wind changes, as I think it will, we will weigh before dawn. Mr. Fowler, a glass of champagne!"

They each had a large glass of the sparkling wine and drank the toast of "All absent friends; God bless them!" to which sentiment Angus and George added another, as they nodded to each other—"Sweethearts and wives!"

So passed the evening of the 4th June, 187—, in quiet, good fellowship. Then bed-time arrived—Good-night!

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEPARTURE FOR LABRADOR—THE GUT OF CANSO—
REPULSE OF BOARDERS—A SHOT—A BEAUTIFUL
SIGHT—BOB GETS INTO TROUBLE.



FF at last! Early in the morning the clank clank of the windlass and the accompanying chant of the sailors made known to the lads that the *Annie* was getting under way.

"Tumble up, Cecil," cried Tom. "We are off. I hear the sailors raising the dead. Yo-heave-ho!" he shouted, springing out of his berth.

"How painfully nautical you have become, Tom," said Arthur. "I wish you'd let us sleep a little longer."

"'Tis the voice of the sluggard! Not a doubt about it," retorted Tom. "The idea of lying in bed when we're under way!"

"Are you going to sit up all the voyage, then, Tom?"

"Or going to sleep only in harbour or at anchor?" said George. "You'll have a wakeful time, Tom, my boy."

"Chaff away, young people," replied Tom, as he hurried to wash and dress. "Here's Captain Morris."

"What are you about, young sir?" cried the captain. "Washing in that water!"

"Of course," replied Tom. "What should I wash in? Air?"

"No, salt water of course. That water's for drinkin',

not washin'. I'll send you down some sea-water. We can't have the stores wasted in washin'. Dirt never kills anyone either."

"You've put your foot in it, young man," said Bob cheerfully. "In another minute—"

"I would have put my *face* in it," said Tom laughing. "Water—water everywhere, but not a drop to wash," he continued, as he turned and sat down on his bed-locker. "I wish the water would come—I want to dress."

The water, carried in a bucket by one of the sailors, soon arrived, and Tom managed a wash.

"I wonder what we shall do when we reach the ice!" he said.

"Scrape yourself with a sheet of it—that is all we shall be able to do," remarked Cecil. "The Esquimaux do not wash, I believe!"

Tom grunted, and finished his toilette as quickly as possible. He hurried on deck and watched the coast of Nova Scotia passing by the schooner.

"Lovely day, captain," he remarked.

"First-rate," replied Morris. "No fog, and a fine wind. Guess we'll sail through the Gut and leave Cape Race alone."

"What's the Gut? a channel?"

"Yes, a narrow channel—the Gut of Canso. It lies between Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island. If this weather holds we'll make the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and go through the Straits of Belle Isle."

Cecil then came on deck, and, after inquiring concerning the route, he took out his map and noted the course suggested.

"The Gut is rather narrow," he remarked.

"Plenty of room for us," replied the master. "There's about fourteen miles of sailin' in it, and but nine hundred yards width at its widest; the little Gut is narrower."

Up came the rest of the party one by one to enjoy the fine weather and the increasing breeze. Then breakfast was announced by Black Sam, who came along laden with bread, coffee, and "salt junk," a meal for which the sea air had already disposed the young travellers.

"When shall we anchor first, captain?" inquired Tom.

"Tom wants to have a sleep," remarked Arthur. "He has declared he won't rest while we're under way."

"Won't he!" remarked Captain Morris with a grin. "We sha'n't anchor unless we're obliged. There's no nice place in the Gut. But if the wind drops towards evenin' we'll lie to. It's no use trying the Gut in a light wind—the tide's so strong."

The wind unfortunately behaved as the captain had anticipated. As the day drew on it very gradually died away until the flapping sails and the rolling lazy swell took the place of the rounded canvas and the sparkling foam. Oh what a dead calm it was! Creak, clack, *slat* went the blocks and sails. The schooner lifted and dropped helplessly. Looking over the side into the glassy water the boys made out strange monsters—sun-fish and other curious inhabitants of the ocean; and occasionally a shark-like fin was perceived, which effectually precluded bathing. The sea-weed drifted by on the tide, and all on board felt very much inclined to be ill!

The captain had compassion on the young men, and finding them "squeamish" came "downstairs" for a yarn.

"Ah! this calm reminds me of the time we caught the shark that swallowed Bill Buntin', my messmate, on board the *Nipnaukie*, down south. A nasty thing it was, too."

"Tell us all about it, captain," said George Hamilton, who was always ready for a story

"It ain't a long yarn," replied the kindly captain, "but it's curious. The *Nipwaukie* was an unlucky ship. Some said she was haunted by a sailor who had thrown himself overboard one stormy night. He did it on purpose—chucked himself off the jib-boom like a stone, and went down as the same.

"O' course I heard the facts, but I didn't care for the drowned man, who, they all aboard said, used to come and sit astride of the boom in every gale o' wind. Why he got up, or how he got up, I can't tell. He had called out to his messmate on the boom that night he suicided, 'Lower away!' and, it was repeated, his ghost said the same ever after when seen.

"But the man who had been next the suicide on the jib-boom a-furlin' the sail became moody and queer. He talked in his sleep, and very soon he became quite a Jonah aboard. The men all feared him and wouldn't have anything to say to him by day or night. I laughed at the idea of a ghost, but the others all declared that a big shark, which had begun to follow the vessel, was the 'suicide' in disguise, and would have Asterly, the messmate, some day.

"Things got worse and worse. No one would speak to Asterly. The men were all afraid, and said no luck would ever attend the ship so long as he was on board. Many a time we tried to catch that shark, which the watch declared had the look of Dick who had suicided. So you may imagine we were not very lively that time, particularly as the shark kept up with us day and night.

"We tried catchin' him, harpoonin' him, shootin' him; but everything failed. We could do nothin'—not a thing—until at last things became so unbearable that there was nearly a mutiny, and our voyage not half over."

The captain paused. Seeing the lads and the elders all attention and much better he proceeded:

"One evening, when it was Asterly's watch, he went to the captain and said he was mighty ill, and requested to go below. The captain gave him leave and he went, but when the hurricane began and all hands was called to take in sail, this man was found dead in his hammock.

"I don't believe that there's been very many gales o' wind such perfect hurricanes as that one. We laid out on the yards and took in sail *somehow*, but the wind nearly blew our teeth down our throats.

"But there the man lay dead, and the back fin of the shark with the suicide face never quitted the counter—not a yard!

"We all knew what the shark was awaitin' for; and the doctor couldn't tell whether the man was dead, for the rollin' and pitchin' was awful. The thunder and lightning deafened and blinded us; the wind roared till we couldn't hear the thunder. This went on all day and night. The shark stayed by watching like a cat; and the doctor managed to declare that the man was dead. He was changing colour already.

"Then our captain determined to bury the poor corpse. It was shrouded in a hammock and shotted, though two men declared it moved. The storm continued. Nevertheless the captain said he would read the service over *it*, and we all stood by in the lightnin' and hurricane. The service was read; the corpse was just being canted into the sea, when out of the shroud came a fearful yell of terror. *The man was alive!*

"We held back, but a sudden heave of the ship sent the poor fellow overboard—one wild shriek and all was over. He was buried alive!"

"Horrible!" exclaimed Cecil when the captain paused. "Horrible!"

"And what became of the shark? Did he go away then?" asked Arthur.

"Not for long," replied the captain. "A dead calm

fell next day, and there was the shark as before. We were lying lazily on the water when some one suggested we should catch the brute if we could! After a while we did, and inside him we found the remains of the man who had, as we believed, murdered our messmate—the remains of the man who had been buried alive!

"It was just such a calm as this," concluded the captain as he prepared to go on deck again. "So there's my yarn, and you are welcome to it. The breeze is springing up again, I perceive. We'll have a nice run now."

The boys endeavoured to throw off their lethargy under the cheery exhortations of the captain, who notwithstanding the somewhat serious nature of his duties managed to raise the spirits of the young people. They had confided in him all their hopes and aspirations concerning the Talisman. Angus had won his heart by his deference and withal his self-reliance. The young lieutenant had shown Captain Morris the rough indications on paper by which the "Talisman" would be found; and though Morris shook his head and pursed up his lips in doubt, Angus was not to be daunted.

There was no adventure in passing the Gut, the first portion of which is very narrow, so much so that Tom began heaving bits of biscuit overboard in the hope of some pieces reaching the shore.

"One could almost leap on land," cried he.

"Yes, anyone can *leap on land*," retorted Bob. "There is no difficulty in that. But to jump ashore from the ship, Tom—!"

"Shut up!" cried Tom in school-boy parlance; "don't be stupid. I mean we could almost leap on land from here. Couldn't we, captain?"

"Almost," replied the captain; "not quite."

There is not much room, however, for the lowing of cows and even the smell of the flowers could be easily

distinguished as the vessel made her way fairly well against the tide, which runs strongly through the Gut.

Passing through Manchester Bay, which divides the two channels, the *Annie* ran by the wooded cliffs and pretty villages in the "chines" or valleys, which were suggestive of home.

There were numerous vessels about, and the little schooner kept company with them, holding her own with larger craft, much to the delight of the boys. As Cecil with his brother-in-law was speculating on the chances of overtaking a certain brig, the friends perceived a boat row up from one ship to another, remain a moment, and then go off again to another.

"I wonder what that boat is about!" said Cecil. "Is there any custom-house, think you?"

"No house," replied George; "but it certainly seems a custom, for none of the vessels appear to mind the intruder. What's the matter, captain?"

"The matter! With that fellow in the boat? Why, he levies toll on all our vessels for his lighthouse. I suppose he'll tax us soon."

"Why should we pay?" cried Bob the impulsive. "Let us decline the tax (in come tax you might call it). I vote we do not pay."

"So do I," cried Bob.

"You must, you'll see," added Arthur.

"Hollo, 'Croaker!'"

This elegant name had been bestowed upon Arthur in recognition of his generally depressing anticipations.

"Hollo, old Croaker, will you pay?"

"Not if I could help it, I wouldn't. Shall we run away, Cecil?"

"No; we will just give him the slip. We don't want his old light. If we used it we would pay for it; let him alone, captain."

"Ye can't give him the slip; the wind is not strong

enough," said Morris. "We'll try, though I think the water is getting a bit darker to windward. If the wind freshens we will clear him."

The boys watched the boat with much interest. The little man in it seemed very active and energetic. His men pulled with a will, and made the boat skim over the rippling water at a speed which the *Annie* could not escape in such a light breeze. The schooner, however, was making good way, and all hands hoped to play a trick on the man in the boat.

"We're going ahead now; perhaps he won't come after us," cried Bob. "If he does—!"

"What will you do, most valiant knight?" inquired George Hamilton mockingly.

"I will resist him," said Bob, theatrically, brandishing a hatchet he had picked up. "I will cleave him to the chine, as the old Templars clove their enemies, I understand."

"He'll cleave to you in a way you won't like, my lad," remarked Angus. "Here he comes."

"I am determined he shall not board us. We are British travellers, not traders. We are all Englishmen, except the skipper and his crew, of course," added Bob after a pause. "Never mind, we will resist. Come, Tom, be a man!"

"I'm ready. Now Arthur; Cecil; come and resist the tyrant lighthouse man."

"Here's the breeze," cried George. "See, she moves! He will never reach us."

"You bet he will," remarked the captain, who had taken no part hitherto in the discussion. "He has a fine boat."

The captain was right. The long low gig came rushing along and was evidently gaining, but slowly, upon the schooner; which, however, was gathering more way every minute.

"He will catch us," remarked Bob. "Look at that

fellow in the bow with his grapnel, ready to throw it. If he does, I'll cut the rope.

"You wouldn't do such a thing, Bob," said Arthur.

"Wouldn't I!" remarked Tom, flourishing the hatchet. "You'll see."

Angus laughed, never heeding, and waited to see the end of the chase.

A hail from the man, then a few words to his crew, the boat shot close alongside, and in a second the hook came whizzing into the main rigging.

"Your dues!" shouted the man. "Light dues! I'm comin' aboard. Put your helm down."

"Put your hook down," cried Bob. "We are English sailors and pay nothing—Go away!"

"I'll wring your neck, my bantam, when I come aboard," cried the exasperated man in the boat, which was now being dragged along at about seven knots. "Haul!" he cried to his men.

The men hauled at the rope, but Bob was as good as his word; with a spring he dashed at the taffrail, and with two clean cuts of his sharp hatchet severed the rope nearly through. The remaining strand could not stand the severe strain, and the three men who were hauling in fell back into the boat, amid a roar of laughter from the boys.

The schooner darted away, leaving the tax-gatherer mixed up with his men under the thwarts; angry at being thwarted, no doubt.

"Look out!" cried Morris. "Lie down all, he's got a revolver."

Suddenly a "pinging" sound was heard, and a bullet struck the mainmast, passing between Cecil and Bob.

"The coward!" cried Arthur, roused to retaliation. "I'll pepper him."

He rushed to the cabin and brought up a rifle, which he at once proceeded to load.

"Put that down, Arthur," said Angus, "we are out of range, and in any case we were the aggressors. No one is hurt, so no harm is done. Had Cecil or any of us been wounded, I promise you I would have given that bouncer a lesson. Let him alone."

"Well done, Croaker!" cried Tom. "I declare, Arthur got his back up that time, Bob. You did it beautifully, but I'm glad we are running so fast. He'll never get us within range now."

"Hope not," replied Angus; "but if the wind falls light he may come upon us in the dark."

"If he does," said George quietly, "I'll toss him overboard—see if I don't."

Fortunately for the collector, or perhaps for George Hamilton, the wind held, and increased in force till a reef had to be taken up in the mainsail. But the day was fine, and the Gulf not too rough.

"You're in luck, young gentlemen. The Gulf has a bad name, and can give it you pretty rough, I can tell you. There, now, isn't that a picture! Look at Porcupine Head."

All the young party were obliged to confess the view was lovely. The reddish soil of Cape Breton reminded them of Devon and its cows near their own division of the county. The dark and bright greens of pines and other trees made the island appear most attractive, particularly when contrasted with the blue of the sea, which sparkled in the bright rays of the sun.

"I declare," cried Angus, "it reminds me of the Spanish shore near Gib'. Do you think so, George?"

"I do. I knew there was some place I had seen like it, but I fancied it was one of those curious impressions one has when visiting a new place. It seemed quite familiar to me. Now I understand why."

"Suppose we have this weather all through," said Tom. "There won't be any ice and snow. No icebergs; they'll all be melted. What a sell!"

"So likely!" remarked Cecil. "Wait for a couple of days till you see an iceberg."

"I will," retorted Tom; "and when I do I will land on it; see if I don't!"

The evening drew on rather chilly, and the travellers were glad of wraps and thick gloves. The schooner ploughed her way now less rapidly, and the sea became calmer. The sun set in glowing colour, lighting up the red tints of that great island which was taken from the French, restored at the Peace of Aix la Chapelle in 1748; but Louisville, the great fortress, fell again next year into British hands. The fisheries are remarkably productive, and have been always recognized as most important.

"Millions and millions of herrings," remarked the captain. "Whales, cod, and mackerel, that's what it means. There's many a fortune may be made up Labrador way in the fishing. Salmon, seals, oysters, all come in, and the trout are beautiful."

"Sea trout?" said Angus.

"Fresh-water trout," replied the captain. "Anything you please a'most; and as to ice, it is the foundation of many a pile of dollars."

"Rather an unstable one, I should think," remarked Bob with a wink. "Apt to melt away, isn't it?"


The captain glanced at him and walked away, disgusted apparently.

"I wish, Bob, you wouldn't be always cracking your wretched jokes. You have offended the captain," said Cecil. "He was giving us much useful information, and you interfered. Do learn sense."

"Sorry I spoke," replied the abashed Bob; "but when he talked of ice foundation I couldn't help remarking on the insecurity of his investment. I'll never make another pun—till—next time," he added laughing; "and now I'll go and smooth down the captain with a nice little apology."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VOYAGE UP THE STRAITS—LAND HO!—BOB'S ADVENTURE WITH THE AUKS—THE ICEBERGS.

HIVERY shakery, isn't it cold!" was Tom's first intelligible remark as he got up next morning; but on endeavouring to stand upright he was sent flying across the cabin and brought up suddenly against Cecil's bunk.

"Hollo!" cried Cecil. "What's up?"

"I am," replied Tom dolefully. "Wish I wasn't. There's a storm, I suppose, or an iceberg; it's awful cold."

"Go to bed then," retorted Cecil. "You are shaking like an aspen."

"I shall have to walk all the way round. I can't cross the cabin in safety," replied the boy, who forthwith proceeded to make his way by fits and starts, holding on carefully. He was finally flung head first into bed by a sudden lurch, and remained passive for a while.

"I suppose it's about mid-day, Cecil?" he said after a pause.

"More likely mid-night. You forget we are going north, and the sun will hardly set for some days as we proceed."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Tom. "I can never sleep with a night-light even. What a bore to have to sit up for twenty-four hours every day."

"Keep quiet, can't you," cried Cecil. "Shut up!"

It was a foggy damp morning, and Captain Morris strongly advised the party in the cabin to lie close until the fog cleared. The north-easter had come over the ice-fields, and now gave them a gentle hint of what the north could do. The captain himself was wrapped up in pea-coat and oilskins, and even he complained of the sudden change.

But the bad weather continued. The lovely Magdalen Islands were passed in a lull of the storm, and the boys ventured up, but saw little. Gannet Rocks were more visible after a while, and the thousands of gannets which were incubating or wheeling in the air above the nests were a source of wonder to all. The birds were of course at a considerable distance, but with the telescope, which Captain Morris kindly steadied for the lads, they could see millions of the birds packed on the cliffs side by side hatching their eggs.

"I should like to tame a gannet," remarked Arthur. "They are rather handsome birds. Can't we land captain? It is white with gannets."

"Land on that island!—look at the cliffs. Red sandstone cliffs sloping outward or hanging over, and talk of landing! Why, you might land if you want to go ashore on the wreck."

Arthur gathered from the captain's reply that landing on Gannet Island was not a venture to be easily made, so he "did not press the argument," as he confided to Bob afterwards, "for the captain seemed inclined to close the conversation."

"You be gannet," remarked Bob, jumping out of reach; "and it is quite fair for him to finish."

"I wish Cecil had heard you; he would smack your head, and serve you right," said Arthur. "Are you ever sensible?"

"Not in these regions," remarked the lad. "It is too jolly to be sensible of anything but fun. What a

regular lark this all is! We shall soon see an iceberg, I suspect."

"There's Anticosti," remarked the captain, as he indicated a line of what looked like snowy cliffs. "It's a big place, over a hundred miles long—about thirty wide."

"Anticosti is a curious name," said Cecil. "It must be a derivation surely?"

"It is," replied Angus, as the captain shook his head. "It was discovered by Cartier in 1534 and called Assomption, then named Ascension. The Indians called it "Naticotee," and the French Anticosti by some curious transposition. St. Patrick may have gone there, for you will find no toads, nor snakes, nor frogs. But there are plenty of seals, and trout, and salmon, besides bears, foxes, and martens. It is on a very dangerous coast," concluded the lieutenant.

"That's a fact," assented Captain Morris. "There's lots of spruce wood, but no very fine timber, I'm told, except some pines. There's currants, gooseberries, and peas; but there are few sheltered harbours. Anyhow, if the people would only go and settle there, there are thousands of acres of good land which farmers would be glad to get. I wonder no one takes Anticosti in hand and works it up. The English could make it a very paying place. We would if we had it, you may depend."

"I can quite believe that," replied George Hamilton. "The fisheries must be valuable, and the land productive. Settlers do not like it apparently. I don't know why."

The party were talking and occasionally sweeping the horizon with the telescopes, when after a more than usually long stare Cecil exclaimed:

"I believe there's land!"

"Whereabouts?" asked Bob.

"Where away?" asked Angus quickly.

"In front," said Cecil. "There!"

"On the weather-bow," said Tom with an air of importance. "In front, indeed!" he added scornfully. "Why can't you speak properly? In front! O my!"

"That can't be land surely," said Angus, turning to the skipper. "There in the north-east?"

"Likely Labrador—unless it's a berg," replied the captain. "There's a many icebergs comes tearin' down from the Straits, so we shall have to look out now pretty close."

Cecil got his map and studied it. The Straits he found were those of Belle Isle.

The white mass approached gradually. The tide or current was setting down the Strait, and already the berg was drifting into the Gulf.

"Let us go near and see it," cried Tom.

"I want to land on an iceberg," added Bob. "I'd give anything to stand on that little flat piece, if there was room."

"That little flat piece' is about three acres in extent," replied Angus. "As to landing, let me see you try it."

"So you shall if you will give me leave. I would go in a minute."

"We shall have plenty of ice when we get through the Straits of Belle Isle. I only hope we shall not be caught in it," remarked the captain. "You won't be in such a hurry to see an iceberg in three months' time, Master Tom."

"I daresay not, captain. Meanwhile I will have a look at this fine fellow all the same."

"Ready about," called out the captain. "Stand by for stays. That's it. So."

The *Annie* obeyed her helm, and rounded gradually off on the opposite tack to observe the evolutions and revolutions of the big iceberg. To the young people it seemed a most extensive mountain towering high

above the schooner's masts, and looking at first like pure white marble. It had a grand effect as it came along, perceptibly chilling the atmosphere. The sea dashed up against the sides as against a cliff of rock. Caverns and blow-holes were observable in the base and sides, into and out of which the waves rushed and swirled with tremendous noise. It was certainly a grand sight, the blue veins here and there only serving to bring out more strongly the marble purity of the mass of ice. The *Annie* encountered many more before her memorable voyage was finished, and ice became as monotonous as the ocean in a calm.

The iceberg passed on, and the *Annie* resuming her course made for the Straits. So the day passed, and next morning there was a sudden cry of "Land!"

The crew of the celebrated ship which carried Columbus could not have heard the cry of "Land, land!" more joyously than did the young explorers on the *Annie*. Breakfast, generally a meal which claimed and received considerable attention, was unheeded. Bob and Tom raced for the companion, and would have had a good "first view" had not the desire for precedence caused a tussle that blocked the stairs. Cecil and George quickly separated the pair who were so manfully striving for first look, and the result was that they came up last of all more or less "tattered and torn," and looking, like the maiden, "all forlorn."

"Yes, that's land, and no mistake," said Captain Morris. "That is LABRADOR, young sirs, and a capital voyage you've made of it."

"Labrador! Actually Labrador!" cried Bob. "Well, I've often seen the name in my map, but I never thought I should see it in nature. Actually Labrador! Look at the gulls, Tom."

"There's a whale!" exclaimed Cecil. "Isn't it, captain?"

"Yes, an old right whale, sure enough. You'll see

some grampuses by'm by. Grim place, sir, is Labrador," he continued, addressing Angus.

"Why is it called Labrador, I wonder?" said Arthur. "Does any one know?"

"I think I can tell you," replied George. So while the vessel approached George Hamilton gave his young hearers the results of his inquiries, which we condense, for we have found that few lads know anything of Labrador yet.

"Gaspar Cortereal, a Portuguese, is said to have discovered Labrador," remarked George. "In those days the explorers always wore spectacles of green or *couleur de rose*—at least so we may suppose, else we cannot otherwise account for calling the snowy and icy territory westward 'Greenland,' or Labrador the *Terra Laborador*, or 'Cultivated Land.' Considering the sterile and forbidding nature of the country—its precipitous granite cliffs and rocks, its storms and fogs, its inhospitable character—we may well echo old Cartwright, who made several voyages thither, and say, 'God created this country last of all, and put there the refuse material which was of no use to man!'"

"But," said Angus, "surely Bradore Bay must have been derived from the French *Bras d'Or*. *Les Bras d'Or*—or the veins (arms) of gold, would indicate the existence of precious metal."

"There never was any that ever I heard of," remarked Captain Morris. "No gold was ever found in Labrador—it's only hearsay—no ore exists."

"Except *orally*," suggested Bob, ducking to avoid the well-deserved "back-hander" from George, who then continued:

"Very little is known of the interior of the country, except by the Hudson Bay Company's people. After old Cartwright I am not aware of any traveller, except Mr. Hind, who has given us any valuable information concerning the country. The Moravians

have established missions, and we shall be kindly received by the Esquimaux. But I am afraid our expedition will bring us only trouble—perhaps lead us into danger. But here we are. Look at the black, forbidding rocks, and say you think highly of the 'Cultivated Land.' It is only Bob who would attempt to make a joke in or upon such a sterile country."

Bob again expressed regret, but added his desire to go ashore.

"We have been days and days on board now," he said. "Let us have a run ashore."

"What do you say, captain?"

"I've no objection. We will land as soon as we can and do some shootin'. There's a little bay yonder, we may make that. French," he continued, addressing the helmsman, "keep her away a trifle. We'll round off and run in beyond those rocks."

"Ay, ay," replied the steersman.

The main sheet was eased off, and the *Annie* ran a point away. Then after a while she tacked. The foresail was run down, and in a few minutes more the schooner was riding safely in a little bay under the cliffs in ten fathoms. The anchor went rattling down, the noise of the clanking chain disturbing thousands of auks and other sea-fowl, which rose and circled around the rocks screaming at the intruders.

"Look here, Bob," said George firmly. "No puns upon the auk, please. I see what you intend to do. But I'll leave you behind if you even hint at awkward or any such jokes. *Diwi!*"

"My eye!" ejaculated Bob promptly. "I'll take care and walk straight."

George turned round and looked at his careless young relative with suspicion. But Bob was as demure as a dove or a Quakeress, and George Hamilton made no further remark.

The boat was lowered, and the party prepared to

pull ashore. The coast was most forbidding. Not a scrap of green vegetation was visible, but mosses and lichens thrived in the crevices. Little waterfalls born of the snow fell from the dusky cliffs and proclaimed that summer was nigh at hand.

"Now for a little gunnin'," remarked the captain, who, armed with a fowling-piece, had made up his mind for fresh meat and pure water. "There's no want of game."

After a laborious climb the party succeeded in ascending, and then proceeded to deal destruction amongst the auks and eider-ducks. Birds and eggs speedily became the prey of the fowlers, and as there was no difficulty in knocking over the birds the sportsmen soon had enough. The game was picked up. Suddenly Bob was missed.

"He has got away, foolish fellow! and will certainly get into some mischief. Where can he be? Listen. Quiet. Now all shout."

The party shouted simultaneously, and a faint voice replied from amid the rocks. In that direction all hurried, calling out, "Bob, Bob!" as loudly as they could.

After some considerable search, and guided only by Bob's intermittent cries, mingled with other and more fowl-ish noises, the searchers discovered Robert Wood up to his knees in the saturated moss between two high rocks fighting a pair of auks which he had had the temerity to disturb in their domestic arrangements. He had secured several specimens of eggs; but not content with what he could so easily reach, he desired the auks' private property. The birds naturally resented the intrusion, and flapped him about the head and face unpleasantly, while his footing became more and more precarious. The late snow had melted and softened the moss, which was quite soft, and he sank "deeper and deeper still."

"Come here quickly!" he cried. "Help, or I shall sink in this quagmire! The place is a morass!"

"More ass you for going there," replied George calmly, paying off Bob in his own current coin. "What do you mean by getting yourself into this pickle for?"

"I wanted eggs," said the repentant Robert. "Please pull me out."

George's immediate answer was to discharge both barrels of his fowling-piece. Then he extended the gun to Bob, who caught hold of it firmly, and was dragged out in a miserably wet and draggled condition. The eggs, being broken in the operation, did not tend to improve his appearance.

"You are like an underdone omelette," said George quietly. "Best go on board at once. You'll catch a fearful cold."

"I'll kill those beastly birds first," replied Bob angrily. "They nearly smashed my head."

"It is too soft to hurt much," retorted Cecil. "You will not kill those birds by any means, Bob. They only defended their nest. You alarmed them."

"I expect he made a pun upon them and they thrashed him for it. Quite right," said Captain Morris dryly. "I admire them birds."

"Captain Morris, you are very rude and unkind," said Bob. "I begged your pardon once, and you might let me alone."

"Cheer up, shipmate!" cried the captain heartily. "No offence! But you have laid in such a stock of old jokes that I don't wonder at the birds pegging into you for unloading on them. Shake hands, lad. I didn't intend to hurt your feelins'. Boys will be boys."

Captain Morris and Bob then shook hands very gravely, though a comic twinkle in the master's eye indicated that he quite appreciated the humorous side of the situation. Bob felt rather crest-fallen, but the

lesson he had received, and the cool sarcasm of the captain went far to cure him of his prevailing tendency to ill-timed joking.


The lesson had come very opportunely, for stiff work and considerable danger were likely to be encountered with the ice, which came streaming down in vast masses through the Strait of Belle Isle.

"We are in for it, sir," said the captain next day to Angus after an anxious night (so-called night, for the twilight was scarcely absent all the time). "We are now in the Atlantic, and will probably drift with the ice. I wish we hadn't come up quite so soon."

"So do I," replied Angus, as he watched the currents and listened to the smashing and rending of the ice. "So do I. But we must do our best."

CHAPTER IX.

A RUN NORTHWARDS—A TERRIBLE DANGER—ANGUS
SAVES THE SCHOONER—CLEAR ONCE MORE.

" HIS won't do, gentlemen," remarked the captain after a struggle against the ice which came down as it always comes down the Labrador coast on the current.

"We must keep away to the north-east."

"Surely that will land us in Greenland," remarked George Hamilton.

"We need not go so far," remarked Angus; "but I quite agree with the captain. We must avoid the ice; so let us put her head for Iceland."

"Rather a curious way to avoid it, isn't it? Going to *Iceland* to avoid *ice-water*," remarked Tom.

"It sounds rather so, but we shall not go near Iceland. We will only lay our course for it."

"But now we are going away from Labrador," said Arthur. "Surely that cannot be right."

"Quite right," replied Angus. "Captain Morris will no doubt go about as soon as we clear the ice sufficiently to bear up for the Straits."

"That's the idea," replied the captain. "You may go below and sleep if you can. There will be no darkness at all soon. So make the most of it."

For five days the schooner ran sometimes very close-hauled in a north-east course; then the captain wore

ship and with a good following wind made for the Straits. In the summer the ice is most broken in the north water; while experience has ascertained that in the autumn the coast of Labrador is the freer side. Under these circumstances Captain Morris was fully justified in hugging the north shore, for the tide rushes in and out of the Straits with terrific force and smashes up the ice in the innumerable little inlets. Even when broken up the icy masses are very formidable, and great caution, with a good look-out, is absolutely necessary.

It was the beginning of July when our adventurers entered the Straits in the scarce paling daylight. Unaccustomed to have so many hours daylight, they could by no means reconcile themselves to the absence of darkness.

"I feel as if I had been up all night," remarked George as he came on deck and looked at the land, now plainly visible. "This feeling will wear off in time, but I have a sense of fearful dissipation pervading me."

All the others confessed to wakefulness. "It is no use trying to sleep when the sun never quits the horizon for more than a couple of hours," said Arthur. "One may have too much of a good thing."

"We must put smoked glass in the skylight," remarked Bob, "and draw our curtains. I never wanted to go early to bed at home; but I declare I would like a good dark old English night for a change."

"Land, and ice too," cried the captain. "That's Cape Resolution, I guess; Cape Chudleigh is on the larboard quarter if we could only see it. But that's Resolution, sir, and there's icebergs in plenty. So get on your wraps, young gentlemen."

"Steer small, quartermaster," continued the captain to the sailor at the wheel. "Mind your eyes, Richard," he cried to the man in the bow. "Look out!"

Bump, swish, went the floating ice, knocking and

grinding the bow, and then swirling and tapping alongside, till the schooner passed and left the knobs and the cakes whirling astern in the wake. But at times a bigger piece would come along, and then the schooner had to keep clear or "fend it off" with the ice-poles.

"Here's a monster," exclaimed Tom after a while. "Look, Bob, a regular screamer! a real iceberg! I say, it is a splendid one, Angus!"

"We could do without it, or without its consort," muttered Angus. "I don't quite like these two fellows, captain."

"No more do I, sir. We must try to give them the slip. But upon my word, the position is ticklish—very ticklish, indeed. Mind your helm, Ben."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded Ben.

"That chap to starboard will be into us," cried Arthur, turning pale. "He's bearing down fast."

"The other is approaching it," cried Tom. "I say, Angus, this is beyond a joke. What *shall* we do?"

"Keep quiet," said Angus sharply. "Stand still if you can, and say nothing. We're in a nasty fix."

There could be no question about it. The schooner was in a *very* "nasty fix." The two great bergs, veritable ice-mountains, impelled by some currents or perhaps by the attraction of cohesion, were apparently steering down on each other; and if the schooner did not tack rapidly she would almost surely be crushed between the floating masses.

Each berg was about a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet high; but while one bristled with peaks and beautifully frosted glittering pinnacles, the other was a huge mass rounded off, and sloping in fearful ice precipices to the rolling sea. The sight was most imposing, but terrific in the extreme. One berg seemed like a collection of young "Matterhorns," the other was a fair-sized "Jungfrau."

The former berg was approaching the latter apparently against the wind, so strongly did the tide rush out; and our adventurers one and all contemplated them both with apprehension.

"Cannot we tack?" inquired Angus of the captain.

"We can; but to what end? We shall only get fixed in the cake or jammed in the floe. We must trust to our heels and the wind," replied Morris.

The sailors and the boys were all crowded forward watching the bergs, and listening with a kind of admiring fear to the roar of the waves within the caverns of the icy masses, or to the noise made by the tumbling of great blocks of ice inside the floating ice mountains.

In the great "Jungfrau" berg, as we may call the rounded mass of floating ice, was a kind of arch, an aperture such as we occasionally see in rocks which have been hollowed out by the waves, only of course the architecture of the berg was upon a much grander Gothic scale than any coast scene could be. The wind blew through this aperture, which formed a kind of tunnel through the base of the berg. Over the arch was supported a thick mass of snow-covered surface of ice, while to the other berg quite a cathedral-like appearance was imparted by reason of its numerous pinnacles and minarets.

No one spoke as the schooner drove on between these mountains, darting to sure destruction as it seemed.

"It's 'touch and go,' or rather touch and go no more," remarked the captain grimly. "Hold her up, Ben."

"Luff it is," cried the sailor.

"That will do it," said the captain, "we'll run between them, sure. My gracious!" he suddenly exclaimed, "look at the pack beyond. We can't! We can't get through far. We must go to leeward. Ease her off. Port!"

"Port it is!" echoed the steersman.

The schooner's head went to leeward, and the boom went over as she wore round.

"It's our only chance," whispered the captain to Angus, who stood by the wheel. "Lord help us if the wind fails! We'd best shake hands all round."

"Wait," said Angus; "do not alarm the poor boys. It will be a terrible thing for them, and me too," he added, thinking of Annie first, and of Mr. and Mrs. Tracey, whose children had been committed to his charge. Tears gathered in his eyes. George came up with anxious face.

"Angus, old boy, I'm afraid this means the end of the world for us. Poor Nell!—and Annie too! Shall we call the boys aft and say a prayer?"

"Yes, George. It will be our last. I am not afraid of death; but I think of those who love us, and what they will suffer when the tidings reach England. My darling," he murmured, thinking of Annie, "God protect you!"

"Come aft, lads," cried George in as firm a voice as he could assume. "You may all come," he added as the sailors also turned round. "We are going to say a prayer."

"Prayers!" cried Cecil, his bright face changing to a fear-stricken expression. "Prayers!"

"Yes, Cecil," said George Hamilton. "Boys, it's useless to deny that nothing short of a miracle can save the schooner. We must prepare for the worst. It's an early ending for you, my dear lads; but God's will be done!"

"Amen!" said the sailors, and the boys joined in the response.

"In less than fifteen minutes we shall be either safe, or crushed between these icebergs," said Angus. "Tom, Cecil, Arthur, Bob, George, old fellows, if any of you survive, tell Annie I died with her name upon my lips

in a prayer for her. George, Nell and she will miss us—a little—and—"

Here Angus broke down. He and George clasped hands in a silence which was more eloquent than words.

"Lord have mercy upon us!" cried Captain Morris. "Here's the end. Three cheers, boys, for the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack. They are sailing side by side, and we'll die together, gentlemen, like true chips of the old block. Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

Englishmen and Americans joined in the cheer and shook hands solemnly.

"We can do no more," cried the captain. "The berg to windward will crush us into drift-wood. Steady, men! Ben, keep her full; run at the leeward iceberg; it *may* shave us. What are you about, sir?"

"Give me the helm," cried Angus. "Ben, go forward and kneel down. Boys, Captain Morris, I think we may never see another hour, but I am going to try."

"To try—what?" exclaimed the captain.

"In ten minutes we shall be becalmed under the lee of that pinnacled monster. Now I am going to steer through that other berg while the wind lasts."

"*Through the berg!*" exclaimed all.

"Yes, under that ice-arch. If we can hold our wind I believe we can do it. Give me the helm. Captain Morris, will you come too?"

"That I will," responded the captain. "Sakes alive, you are a fine fellow! I'll bet, we'll run the blockade now," he cried. "Steady!"

The sails bellied out; the spanker held a hatful of wind; the schooner, with all fore-and-aft sail set, went dashing on through the cakes of ice on her desperate venture. Steady!

"Steady it is," cried the captain. "Now a trifle of starboard, sir. Hurrah!"

The great aperture yawned in the berg. Beyond

the arch glistened the icy sea, and a beautiful light illuminated the mass. On, on, darted the *Annie*, held by the skilful hands of Angus and Captain Morris.

The schooner neared the berg. Its enormous mass struck a chill mentally and physically upon all on board. A loud roaring of the sea was audible; a bear was visible on the snowy slope above—a Crusoe bear, on a very desolate island.

"Poor brute!" muttered Cecil, as he gazed at the bear.

"We shall never clear the tunnel," cried Arthur. "Our mainmast will catch the top."

"It's our only chance," said Tom. "Are you afraid, Bob? are you, Cecil?"

"I can't realize the danger," replied Cecil, "and I really do not feel *afraid* exactly. It seems so unreal that we should be here under such circumstances at all. The icebergs are only a part of what seems to be a dream."

"That's what I feel. I believe, had I the sense to realize the actual danger I should be in a fearful fright. As it is I'm anxious, but no more."

Meantime the schooner was approaching the berg. The heaving of the mass was quite plainly visible now. A hissing, squeezing noise, like escaping air from an air-pump, was audible every time the berg fell in the swell. The air was being pressed from the ice; the berg was losing buoyancy, and settling deeper in the sea.

"Now, quiet for your lives," cried Angus. "Do not utter a sound."

At that moment Wash perceived the bear, and began to bark loudly.

Cecil collared the dog and held him silent. The crisis had come.

The schooner lifted with the wave which hurried onward underneath the arch of ice, or broke in foam against the cliff, as we may call the side of the iceberg.

Steadily and without a quiver of the eyelids, or hands, did the brave pair at the wheel guide the schooner.

The *Annie* fell in the wave, and then her bowsprit was underneath the arch. How beautiful that crystal curve was! but all eyes were fixed upon the masts, and not upon the ice which sparkled coldly all around. The inside was blue, a lovely blue; the outside, a perfectly pure white. The sea was blue and white to match the berg,—a perfect harmony.

A rush, a roar, a plunge, a surge, an immense fragment fell within the iceberg; the waves rose; the arch was passing overhead. The waves lifted the stern of the schooner. Her bow passed out into the rosy evening light; her mainmast touched the ice, and in a second the gaff topsail and the topmast were hanging from the stays; the schooner was driven down deep in the sea.

"She is lost," cried the boys. "Lost! lost!"

"Never!" cried Angus, as the little vessel staggered forward, the spanker coming with a terrific slap against the icy wall. The jib caught the breeze beyond the iceberg.

"Port!" shouted the captain.

The willing wheel flew round.

"Starboard!" shouted Angus. "Look alive!"

The schooner went up "like a bird." The great iceberg proceeded. The mainmast was a wreck, the sails torn, and the rigging all slack and miserable, like a ship in mourning. But she was safe, safe at last!

"Thank God!" said Angus, "that is done. Captain Morris, thank you too!"

"Mr. Fowler, sir, thank God, I say, and the steady hands and cool head which He, for our safety, bestowed on you, a true blue British sailor! Three cheers for Captain Fowler!"

Three such cheers never were heard before nor since.

"Look there," exclaimed George after a thankful silence. "Look astern!"

The bergs approached each other. A tremendous roar succeeded. One "rammed" the other under water, the pinnacles tottered, and then fell. The splash was heard a mile off, and the wave displaced by the fall of such a mass came rushing to leeward. Then the heavy arch of ice shook; a thunder sound was heard, and suddenly the "Jungfrau" of ice bowed her majestic head before the insidious "ram" of the "Matterhorn" iceberg. The arch collapsed; the mighty mass turned slowly over, and fell with a deafening roar into the sea, throwing up a billow twenty feet high which nearly engulfed the *Annis*.

"'Turned turtle,' by jingo!" cried the captain. "It's just as well, gentlemen, we were not there. No mock-turtle in that, Master Bob, eh?"

"It has *taught* us a lesson," muttered the lad, "and I for one am very thankful."

"So say all of us," cried Cecil; and the spirits of all the party rose high. Plentiful rations were served out to the men, and the saloon was the scene of enjoyment and congratulation, till the sun popped up his head again in the far north-east at two A.M.

CHAPTER X.

AN EXCURSION—A SEAL—THE WALRUS AND THE BEARS —LEFT ON THE ICE—ADRIFT!



WHEN the boys awoke the sea was perfectly calm. The schooner's sails flapped idly against the masts; a rolling glassy swell shone in the sun's rays. The cliffs to the north intensified the heat, and on deck the temperature was really high. The sun was burning, and the change from the cool wind and colder icebergs of the day before was astonishing.

The crew were glad of such a calm fine day for repairing the maintopmast and the damaged rigging. All worked with a will, for no one could tell how long the calm would last.

"I suppose we shall drift out to sea again," said Cecil to the captain as they paced the deck after the mid-day meal.

"We may drop back a little," replied Morris, "but see yonder bergs. Look southward. There you can see them moving down with the current. We are out of its influence here."

"Yes, and out of the wind too," said Angus. "I don't quite like the look of things, captain."

"There's no need for alarm, sir; when we have rigged up the topmast we'll be ready. Shouldn't be surprised

if we had a fog. It's a lovely day. What do you say to a seal-hunt?"

"Splendid!" cried Tom, jumping up. "Let us go, Angus; won't you? It will be fun to catch a seal."

Angus looked at the captain.

"There's many yonder sunnin' themselves on the ice. If you can board one o' them cakes you will have a chance of putting some salt on their tails."

"Can't we find a walrus too?" asked Cecil. "I should like to hunt the wily walrus."

"Yes, I daresay you will find a walrus inshore. You can shoot or spear the seals."

"Shall we take old Washington with us? Eh, Wash, would you like a run on the ice?"

Wash barked assent, and the lads had decided to take him, when the captain suggested that the dog would alarm the seals, and therefore he had better remain on board.

So Wash was left behind, though he very much desired to join the expedition. The captain made the lads put on their thick pea-jackets and take some food. George preferred to remain on board.

"Now, sir," said the captain, addressing Angus, "remember, please, that when you hear me fire a gun it will be for your return. We may have a breeze up from the north-east before morning, or perhaps a squall. But you will easily find your way back. I'll keep my eye on you!"

"Do so, captain. We will land, if we land at all, on yonder head, so you will know where we are. Good-bye, George! Good-bye, captain!"

"Good-bye!" said the captain. "Take care of yourselves. Andrews will accompany you."

Andrews was one of the steadiest of the crew, and understood seal and walrus hunting. He had already put guns and harpoons in the boat. The spears were furnished with long lines; so when the walrus dived,

as he does when attacked, the line would indicate his whereabouts.

"If you can't find a seal willing to wait for you, you must wait for him," remarked Andrews when the boat was under way.

"Wait where?" inquired "Master Sarcil"—"on the ice?"

"Yes, sometimes; and always in the winter, the seal makes a breathing-hole in the ice and puts up his head for air. Then is your chance. If you miss, you may have to wait for a long time again."

"There are plenty of seals yonder," remarked Angus. "We must get between them and the open water."

The boat cautiously approached, and the particular seal which Tom had calculated on capturing winked quietly, but did not move.

"I believe he is asleep," whispered Tom. "Give me the harpoon, Angus."

"Mind how you throw it, sir," remarked Andrews. "If you go overboard you will be nearly frozen to death."

"I'm all firm," replied Tom. "Now, you fellows, pull hard and prevent the seal giving me the slip."

The "fellows" who were pulling complied. The boat approached, the seal never stirred; and Tom rose up to give him the harpoon, when with a sudden turn the seal plunged into the water close to the boat.

"You beast!" exclaimed Tom, throwing the harpoon with all his force and striking the seal. "Ah ha, my friend!" he continued. "That's a palpable hit."

Unfortunately Tom did not long enjoy his triumph. He had somehow managed to get the line entangled round his ankles, and as the seal dived Tom's feet were pulled from under him. The rope tightened, and in another second or two he was overboard.

He fell on the edge of the ice, and for a moment was pulled along by the seal. But his body acted as a very

excellent drag; and so, aided by his struggles and the roughness of the ice, which bruised him somewhat, Tom was brought up, not exactly "all standing," but pretty sharply.

Those in the boat, perceiving he was not much hurt, gave vent to a shout of laughter.

"Poor Tom's a-cold!" quoted Angus as he gained the ice. "But he has caught the seal."

Tom was sitting up, wearing a somewhat rueful expression, but already hauling in the line.

"Come along, Angus; let us pull him up. Isn't he heavy?"

"I congratulate you, Tom," cried Cecil, laughing. "You have reached the dignity of Lord High Chancellor by obtaining the great seal."

"It was rather a 'pull,'" remarked Bob. "I must say, Tom, that seal has made a very decided impression on you."

"Here he is!" exclaimed Tom, quite ignoring all this chaff. "Here he comes!—what a beauty! Lovely eyes, hasn't he? Seems reproachful too!"

"No wonder!" remarked Arthur. "Poor beast!—it seems rather a shame to kill him after all."

But Andrews thought otherwise. In a few minutes the ready knife had quite disposed of the wounded seal, and the body was carefully placed in the boat. By this time all the other seals had slid off the floe and hidden themselves under the ice or beneath the leaden surface of the sea.

"What a lovely day—so warm, and yet with ice all round us! The glare is rather trying, though," remarked Cecil.

"I have brought goggles," said Angus; "here is a pair. Now let us pull on and endeavour to find a walrus."

They pulled towards what appeared to be the mainland, but when the boat had got round the floe the

lads found a small rocky island surrounded by ice and water, and several yards from the forbidding cliffs great icy solitudes, with some dark rocks, upon which sat birds of various species. There was a little current setting out of the cove, as the tide receded into the Straits.

"Strikes me this is rather a dreary place," remarked Andrews. "I wouldn't go too far up the creek if I was you, sir."

"No, Andrews; we might be hemmed in by the ice when the tide flows again. But we are in no danger here, I think," replied Angus.

"Well, no, sir. But, bless you! these places are full of traps. It's as well to be cautious," said the sailor with a significant nod.

"Here's the island—why, it's all ice. I thought it was rock," exclaimed Cecil—"didn't you, Tom?"

"Yes, we all did. Bob, look here! there is a fine specimen of a walrus, or morse. Now you have an opportunity, out of reach of Captain Morris, for making an original joke about 'remorse,' or something of that kind."

"I sha'n't," retorted Bob. "I'd be ashamed to make such a pun. Remorse!—rubbish!"

"Let us catch this fellow; he will be first-rate sport. Look at his tusks! There are several more walruses swimming. The brown backs and flappers or fins are occasionally visible. See!"

"The ice is thickening, sir," whispered the sailor to Angus. "There's cold weather coming."

"We will return as soon as we have taken this walrus, Andrews. He will scarcely escape us now."

The boat was run on the island of ice. The walrus was asleep. Suddenly a curious growl like a bear's growl was heard. All the adventurers halted and looked at each other.

"It's a bear, I believe," exclaimed Tom.

"Come away," cried Arthur. "We shall be devoured. Quick—let us get off!"

"We can fight one bear, surely," replied Bob. "Can't we, Angus?"

"I don't think we need—I can see no bear."

Another and a louder growl echoed in the caverns of the ice.

"Thunder, I believe," cried Andrews; "here's the squall. I wonder if Captain Morris will see it in time."

"Surely we are not likely to have thunder!" cried Bob. "It's too Arctic for thunder."

"Oh dear, no!" replied Angus. "The squall will soon pass over. Look! it is coming from the north-west."

The cloud rose suddenly behind the cliffs, and in a few minutes a driving rain and hail came fiercely down. Two brilliant flashes of lightning came out of the cloud, followed by the low, grumbling, and not very loud thunder. But the peals echoed from rock to rock and re-echoed amid the bergs until it seemed as if they would never cease to return the sound.

The rain-squall passed diagonally over the Straits, which seemed to steam as the cold shower fell on the water and the ice-floes. The adventurers could trace the shower as it passed to the south-east, where it met some other clouds coming in an opposite direction, and then and there had a duel. The scud which had passed flashed and growled at being stopped on its way to the ocean, but the smaller clouds had the best of it. Like a number of dogs attacking some huge animal they tired and exhausted the squall-cloud, and then hurried it back up the wind again in their whitish-gray arms, which soon extended over the warm sun.

Meantime the boys had procured their harpoons and made ready to attack the walrus.

"He is uncommonly quiet by that hole," said Cecil.

"I suppose he thinks he is monarch of all he surveys."

"I wonder how he got into that aperture in the ice. He must have dug it out, I suppose," said Tom.

"Not very likely," remarked Angus. "Heave ahead!—we must make haste."

"Why, there's plenty of time, Angus. The sun will scarcely leave us, and we have food with us."

"Yes; but that squall was a warning, I take it. What do you say, Andrews?"

"Yes, sir. If we were out off Newfoundland now, I'd say as a thick fog would be on us before morning. It's that way on the Bank, I know."

The boys hurried on, and then turning aside approached the immense walrus very cautiously. They crawled up, and then with one accord dashed their harpoons into the enormous carcass. The great tusks seemed to shake, but the creature never stirred.

"He's rather amused than otherwise," said Cecil. "He must be fast asleep. Try a shot, Tom."

"Let's have another shy," returned Tom. "Now, Bob—Cecil—all together!"

Three more javelins struck the animal, but he did not even growl. He lay as quiet as ever.

"He's bewitched!" cried Arthur, who had stood aloof.

"Why don't you go up and see?"

"Go yourself," retorted Bob.

"Very well," replied Arthur, who, taking a fowling-piece in his hand, cocked it, and at once advanced towards the immense walrus.

He certainly was a formidable animal even in repose. His great tusks looked very unpleasant weapons to contend against.

Nevertheless Arthur, with a courage quite unsuspected, advanced until within a few yards and fired.

A low growl from somewhere—it sounded beyond the animal—resulted.

"Bravo, Arthur!" exclaimed Cecil. "Fire again—give him another."

"I can't get at him; he's so hidden up this side. I'll go your side."

"I believe he's dead," said Angus, who now came up, and without waiting to examine farther pulled out one of the harpoons.

The creature growled again loudly. All the boys started back; even Angus felt rather alarmed.

"Very odd!" he exclaimed. "This is a curious specimen. He *is* dead," he continued—"dead as mutton—frozen in the ice. How did he die?—who killed him, I wonder?"

At that moment a warning cry from Andrews, who had remained near the boat, reached the ears of the party by the walrus.

"Look out!" exclaimed Andrews. "Clear off! a bear; a bear!"

Arthur turned round; all the others, who had been looking at him and at the walrus, looked up, and behind Arthur, only a few paces off, stood an enormous white bear, which had fortunately paused in its approach from the cave or hollow in the ice which formed its resting-place.

Arthur with surprising agility leaped over the carcass of the walrus just as the bear raised himself on his hind-legs.

"Fire!" cried Angus, as he discharged his piece. But the shot only grazed the bear's head.

Cecil and Tom both fired and hit the animal. Andrews came running up; but before he could assist the party they were all in retreat to the top of the mound, which formed a kind of hill of ice and snow in the centre of the island. The boat remained by the ice some little distance away, and seemed quite out of reach. The bear was puzzled by the sudden disappearance of the enemy behind the hillock, and paused for

a moment to sniff the walrus. Andrews took advantage of this pause to join the others behind the hillock or hummock of ice, and they all climbed up with some difficulty. They could then perceive the bear, and from their elevated position saw a female bear with two cubs within the shelter of the snow. The walrus had been caught, or had died long before.

"I suspect that family party *cached* that walrus and built their den close by it. This islet was probably fixed to the mainland, but the tide has drifted it out," said Andrews.

"I believe we are moving now," said Angus. "Don't you think so?"

"I fancied so before, and that is why I warned you to make haste. The eddy is now setting the water out of this cove. The ice will close in on the boat, and we will have some difficulty in returning if we are not quick," replied Andrews.

"Let us make a rush," said Tom. "Run down and secure the boat."

"Here comes the bear. Wait until he is climbing up and then we will bolt."

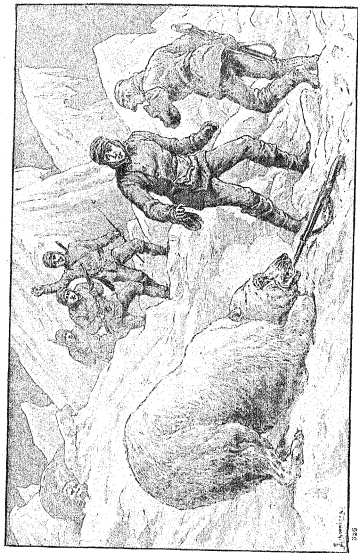
Bruin had advanced while the above conversation was proceeding. Very slowly as it appeared, but at a good pace nevertheless, the enormous animal came after the party in a very determined manner. He reached the foot of the hummock and commenced to climb up very deliberately.

"Fire!" cried Angus.

A volley rang out, the bear tottered, but recovering himself, ascended from lump to lump of ice and then fell dead as the boys descended rapidly on the opposite side. Andrews and Angus waited.

A growling booming sound was then heard, like distant thunder.

"That's a gun from the *Annie*," remarked Angus. "We must go, and go quickly."



"THE GUN EXPLODED, AND THE BEAR FELL MORTALLY HURT."



A scream from Tom and Bob made the others turn round. The female bear had come out, and was rapidly approaching.

It was now a question of safety of the whole party.

"To the boat!" roared Angus. "Leave us if necessary. Run! We will join you."

Arthur, Tom, and Bob ran as fast as they could, but the bear came along the ice faster. The lads were quite out of breath and panted. Still the female bear, very angry and growling savagely, came pounding behind them.

There was no chance unless the boys could reach the boat. Then Arthur slipped, turned, and faced the bear.

"Go on, Tom! hurry! I'll see this out. Good by!" panted Arthur.

If the others had had time to think, they would have been surprised at the despondent Arthur posing as a hero. They only fancied he was tired, but they stopped too.

Suddenly they joined hands and shouted like maniacs. The bear actually paused.

Then Arthur threw his gun at her. It fell on the ice and she advanced to smell it. Just as she put her nose to it, by some extraordinary fatality the gun exploded, and the bear fell mortally hurt.

"Hurrah!" cried the boys. Tom at once fired, and Bob did the same close to the struggling animal, which rolled and clawed around in her agony. Half the head had been blown away, and blood poured from the ghastly wound. One more shot and the bear ceased to struggle.

Boom! came the gun again.

Two shots from the hill and then Angus, followed by Andrews, came hurriedly over the ice.

"Quick, quick! the fog is rising. Let us be off!" exclaimed the former. "Pull up the boat, Andrews."

Andrews hastened to the edge of the ice, and in three minutes he returned with a scared face.

"What on earth is the matter? More bears?"

"Worse than that. The boat has got adrift; and the fog has quite shut out the schooner."

The boys looked at each other with consternation.

"Adrift! what *shall* we do now?" said Arthur.

"Heaven alone knows," replied Andrews with a sadly despondent shake of the head. "We're booked this journey, I'm afraid!"

CHAPTER XL

ON THE ICE—AN ALARM—A TERRIBLE FIRE—THE
"ANNIE" GIVEN UP FOR LOST.



THE boat had certainly got adrift, and was then careering off by itself in the open water. This fact at first gave the adventurers no great concern, for they thought it would be picked up by Captain Morris. But the cold air after the hailstorm acting upon the warmer atmosphere and sea had raised a pretty thick fog which effectually concealed all objects ten yards away.

Captain Morris had noticed the approaching change in the weather and had fired the small gun which he had provided for signalling purposes, or for defence in emergency should any unfriendly demonstration be made by the Esquimaux Indians. Our young adventurers had heard the gun, and were endeavouring to reach the schooner when the boat went adrift.

"This is a serious matter, I am afraid," remarked Angus. "Much more important, Bob, than our loosened boat up the Taw that afternoon. Do you remember?"

"Indeed I do; George picked her up. Perhaps he and Captain Morris will pick up this one. Surely they will see it."

"Perhaps the fog is too thick," remarked Cecil. "Suppose they lose us?"

"Lose us!—can they possibly do that?" cried Arthur

alarmed. "I wish we had never come. Ugh it is cold!"

"Wrap yourselves as closely as you can. It will be a chilly, damp night. We must do all we can to keep each other warm," said Angus.

"There are the bear-skins," suggested Bob.

"Of course," cried Angus. "Well said, Bob; we will skin the animals and find a sleeping place in the snow somewhere!"

"Precious cold it will be," remarked Arthur.

"Cold!" exclaimed Cecil. "You have never read *Arctic Voyages*, or tried sleeping under snow, or you would not say that."

"Now," said Angus, "suppose we divide our labours. We are evidently drifting out, and must keep watch that the schooner does not pass us. Andrews and I will skin the bears, Tom and Arthur shall dig out the snow and make a house, while Cecil and Bob shall keep watch on the ice. Shall it be so?"

"Yes, yes. Let us all do something," cried the lads.

The distribution of the party was then effected. Cecil and Bob proceeded to the further extremity of the ice-island, which was floating on the waves, but in a very unpleasant manner.

"Suppose it sinks, Cecil?" suggested Bob.

"Then I suppose we shall sink too," replied Cecil, with a gloomy smile. "But I hope we shall fall in with the *Annie* before that happens."

"All this seems like a dream to me," continued Bob. "I can't realize that we are in the Arctic Regions. Here are you and I and Angus, with our chums, all together fixed in the ice and snow, with great icebergs all around us, just as we used to read about. It seems odd, doesn't it?"

"Very odd, indeed," replied Cecil. "But you remember uncle's directions. We are here to find a Talisman, which will do us all good, and our future

lives will entirely depend upon whether we do as directed."

"But if we had not come, Cecil, could we have had our money just the same?"

"Only a part of it. Your father wanted you to see something of the troubles and cares of life, I suppose to teach you self-reliance and trust in Providence, with human experience, so he sent you and all of us on a not very difficult journey."

"I think it is *very* difficult. Look at us now. Here we are in the Hudson's Strait—in a very great strait, indeed, Cecil, eh?—and don't you call *that* difficult?"

"But it is our own fault, not his. He gave us clear directions. We should have carried them out. There is nothing very bad in it, you see."

"Isn't there?" remarked Bob. "Here we are nearly perishing with cold in Arctic Regions, nothing but ice and icy water, a fog, and bears—no food—nothing to drink. I feel like Robinson Crusoe."

"Well, have you seen anything?" inquired Tom, who, with Arthur, now came up. "We have dug holes in the snow, and Andrews has nearly skinned a bear. I wish we had a fire."

"No use wishing," remarked Cecil quietly. "Fires must have wood. There is none."

"I'll walk round the ice-island and try to find some drift-wood. There may be some. Come, Arthur."

So the lads went off, and the watch continued.

"Here's something!" shouted Cecil, after a pause. "Hallo! hallo!"

"Hallo!" cried Angus in the distance. He came running up with Andrews, who was all over blood, and looking anything but sailor-like. "What's the matter, Master Sarcil?"

"Something coming. Iceberg, I am afraid."

So it was. An immense berg floating up the Strait, impelled by the tidal current.

The fire obstinately refused to light, so the wearied party curled themselves up to sleep as well as they could. The light faded more and more; the fog increased. But weariness overcame all sense of danger; the young people were fast asleep; even Andrews had yielded to the sense of fatigue, when Angus was awakened by a gun or what he fancied must have been the report of a gun.

He sat up. The whole air was full of a rosy vapour. A red, almost a crimson, steam hung over the island.

"What a wonderful sunrise!" was his first thought. But the sunrise was accompanied by a most curious noise. A crackling, then a gentle rustling sound made itself audible like a faint breeze or a very small wave beating on the sand. What could this be?

Master Tom's fire immediately suggested itself to his mind. But even supposing the wood had been kindled the blaze would not illuminate the fog to such an extent. A burning town, or—Great Heavens!—the *Annie*, might have caught fire. That would account for the noise which had awakened him.

In a moment he roused Andrews, and the boys soon were on the alert.

"What is it?" cried Cecil. "Oh, Angus, a fire!"

"It's sunrise," said Tom. "What a fuss about the sun!"

"Listen!" said Arthur. "I hear the crackling of timber. It's a fire. Your fire, Tom, or else—"

"What are you afraid of, croaker?"

"I'm not *afraid* at all," replied Arthur; "but suppose the schooner had caught fire."

"What nonsense!" cried Bob. "Isn't it, Angus?"

"I am almost afraid it may be," said the young man sadly. "I fancied I heard a gun fired; that woke me, and then I perceived the glare. Let us watch; we can do nothing."

A sad and silent watch it was in that early morning.

The lads tell their experiences to this day, and shiver at the very recollection. All around was mist and dampness. The great iceberg was visible ahead, its rounded massive sides and icy cliffs all red, bathed in the ruddy glare of the burning ship, which, invisible to the party, threw such a roseate glow through the fog. Even the shore, which could now be dimly traced, instead of looking black and forbidding, was illuminated by the conflagration.

"Poor *Annie*!" muttered Cecil. "Poor Georgel!"

"Poor Captain Morris and the crew!" said Angus.

"God help them and us!" responded Andrews.

"What shall we do now?" cried Arthur. "We are simply castaways. What donkeys we were to come at all!"

"Arthur, you forget," said Angus. "We had a solemn duty to perform, and though the idea was, I grant, eccentric and far-fetched, we gave our promise, and must do our duty."

"Hear, hear!" said Tom. "Never say die, Angus. Where's Bob?"

No answer came. They all called out loudly, and the boy came running back.

"It's not my fire," he said, "I'm sure of that. But I hear the crackling. It must be the *Annie* burning—or, I say, Angus—could it be the aurora borealis, eh?"

Angus Fowler started, and looked rather ashamed.

"Upon my word, Bob, I believe you have hit the mark this time," he exclaimed. "It may be the aurora, and looking so red because of the fog. But after all, it might be the schooner."

"Do auroras make such whisperings and cracklings, though?" said Cecil. "I have heard the rustle of electricity in Switzerland up in the high mountains on my alpenstock, but not such crackling as this."

"I never *heard* it before," said Andrews. "I've seen it."

"It is a disputed point whether the noise can be heard. Some travellers say it can be distinctly heard, others deny it. This noise—"

"It is certainly a *roarer*," remarked Bob, "I am convinced of that. Listen!"

"Bob, *do* be quiet," said Arthur; "in these solemn moments, when we may be on the very threshold of death, when we may almost perceive the point of his dart—"

"You can't see the point of my joke. My dear Arthur, cheer up. You won't be any the worse for a little fun. There is no harm, and it is better to laugh than cry. If I don't do one I declare I shall do the other," he muttered desperately, "so don't shut me up."

"Bravo, Bob!" said Angus. "We will forgive you this time. After all, I am by no means sure you are not correct. What's the time?"

"Not one o'clock yet," replied Cecil.

"Then it cannot be sunrise," said Angus, "and it must be the aurora borealis. But it has given us a good fright."

"I never read of a red aurora," said Cecil. "But here it is."

"It is only red because of the vapour," replied Angus. "The sun is red through a fog for the same reason. The noise was new to me."

"Electricity makes noises like that, though," remarked Tom, "and as the aurora is caused by electricity, why should not the aurora make a noise?"

"That remark reminds me of 'the peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked,'" laughed Bob. "However, we have, we hope, solved the riddle, and the *Annie* is, we trust, safe. Cheer up, Arthur, all's serene, old fellow."

"I will turn in again until daylight. I have had enough of the northern lights," said Cecil. "I confess I was alarmed."

So saying, the young men retreated to the den, while Andrews and Angus proceeded round the ice-island to investigate matters.

"Glad we discovered the cause of that light, Andrews," remarked Angus as they proceeded. The aurora had faded by this time and only a pale glow was perceptible.

"Yes, sir," replied Andrews, "so am I—if it was the *aurorer*! I have my doubts myself."

"Then you really think the *Annie* has been lost?" exclaimed Angus, stopping short.

"I can't say for certain, but it's by no means unlikely, sir. Firstly, that black cook he is a lubber, and nearly set fire to the galley once before. Secondly, the crackling of the timbers makes me almost certain. *Roarer borealis* don't go and crackle like that. At least I never heard 'em."

"No more did I," replied Angus. "Let us say nothing though, and behave as if we were quite satisfied."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the sailor. "But on this tack we may run aground, and then where are you?"

"We are in the hands of Providence, Andrews, and must leave the issue to Him."

"Yes, sir; but ye see a little help for ourselves ain't a bad thing neither. It don't do to leave too much to Providence, Mr. Fowler."

"Andrews," exclaimed the lieutenant, "you cannot mean that! You really must not say such things."

"Well, sir, I consider I'm about right. If we do all we can for ourselves, mind you, then we may expect help. I'm an old sailor, sir, and has seen it. But if we sit down and do nothin' at all, waitin' till Providence comes along; then, sir, my experience is we may wait a long time. So I say, help ourselves!"

"I think I understand you now, Andrews. So we *will* help ourselves all we can. Meantime we can trust

for the ending of our journey in the Higher Power. Now, what makes you think the *Annie* is burnt? Frankly!"

"Frankly, sir, this much. While you were looking I was watchin' the sea, and saw some light on the water, and I thought it meant burnin' timber."

"Let us search," cried Angus. "If we find any charred logs or spars we may be certain. Come along."

He hurried away to the edge of the ice to windward where the waves beat upon the side with some little force. All along the brink they gazed, and some dark objects were at length perceived.

"Look there, sir! look there!—under the blocks."

Angus adjusted his glass, and after a brief inspection, he said:

"I am afraid it is too true, Andrews! These are burned and charred timbers. The *Annie* is no more. But what about the crew, the captain, and Mr. Hamilton? Oh, merciful Heaven, what will become of them now!"

CHAPTER XII.

A CONVULSION—A TERRIBLE PROSPECT—THE MIGRATION OF THE ICE—BOB AND TOM GO OFF IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURE.



SCARCELY had Angus ejaculated the foregoing prayer than a most tremendous heaving and grating noise was heard to the eastward, then the whole island began to rock and shake, the sea rose and rushed up the cliffs with a fearful din. The waves caught the ice and banged, slapped, cracked, tore, and washed it away, sending regular spouts and jets up into the air many feet high.

The noise was terrific. The immense berg ahead drifted on, and then with scarce any warning the little island was hurried away up the Strait in the fog at a fearful pace till it was driven high up on the land side of the iceberg, which was also pushed in near the cliffs and almost stranded.

"It's an earthquake," quavered Arthur. "Oh, what a horrible place this is! What with fires and earthquakes, ice and water, we have had nearly enough of Labrador."

"We have scarcely seen it yet," remarked Tom.

"That was not an earthquake," said Angus, who with Andrews had joined the party. "It was the tide.

Look yonder how the water boils in that little creek. The tide is rising fearfully fast."

"It's worse than at St. John," said Andrews. "I've seen it in the bay there—Bay of Fundy, you know, sir. The tides rise here about twenty feet."

"They come in pretty sharp," remarked Bob. "Why is it, Angus?"

"Water forced into a narrow space will rush up much more quickly than under other circumstances," replied Fowler. "Heigh-ho!"

He sighed thinking of the *Annie* and his friend; her crew and captain lying beneath that fierce tidal water!

The fearful grinding of the ice continued. Sometimes the noise was only comparable to loud thunder. The water burst through the little islet in many places, and seriously alarmed the adventurers.

"I wonder how the *Annie* is weathering this break-up," said Cecil. "Hope she won't get injured. Eh, Angus?"

"I think not," he replied vaguely. "The *Annie* is, I believe, out of this safe enough."

"Angus," cried Cecil, "what *do* you mean? Oh, my dear old fellow, surely you do not think that the schooner has gone down! Arthur! Tom! Oh, Angus, tell us quick. Have you heard or seen anything?"

"Yes, Cecil, it is no use disguising the truth. We found, or rather saw floating yonder, some blackened and charred timbers which we cannot doubt are remains of the poor schooner—our home! We are for the future dependent on our own exertions, and must do our best."

"Shipwrecked!" exclaimed Arthur. "Lost!"

"Not lost," replied Angus. "We shall no doubt meet with some vessel when we float out again. Besides, the Esquimaux and the missionaries may find us out, perhaps. For the present, however, we must depend, humanly speaking, on our own exertions."

"That's bad," remarked Bob after a pause. "So we're all Robinsons and Crusoes, with no Fridays, no dogs, no parrots, no nothing!"

"We shall do very well for a while," replied the lieutenant. "We have our fowling-pieces, and ammunition enough amongst us for some time to come. But food is scarce; our boat is probably smashed up in the ice. We must endeavour to find our way up the Strait, cross the ice somewhere, and reach Labrador."

"But the ice is breaking up," cried Tom. "I never hated a 'breaking-up' before! Never mind. Cheer up, Arthur."

"I'm all right," replied Arthur. "I'm not complaining. We can't help it. Let us enjoy ourselves."

"My dear Arthur, what is the matter? You've been crying!"

"Well, suppose I have! I was thinking of dear old George. He was always kind to me; and uncle, aunt, Annie, and Edith—all the lot! I wonder whether we shall ever see Barum again, and the dear old Taw!"

"And Instow and Appledore," said Bob.

"Or father or mother," said Cecil.

"Or Annie," muttered Angus, "and dear Nellie Hamilton. Oh, boys, boys, this is a sad beginning!"

It was indeed, and for some minutes they sat watching the lifting fog, with eyes as moist and throats as dry as any young mourners ever experienced.

"Well," said Cecil after a while, "we must not despair. Come, Angus, old fellow, let us *do something*. If we mope we are lost."

"Quite right, Cecil. We must try to get out of this scrape. Now, boys, cheer up. We must try to look upon this as a holiday trip. We must all be as cheerful as we can or else we shall be ill, and I need hardly say sickness here will be a very serious matter. As a beginning, I vote we cook some bear meat and have a

good meal. Then we will land and explore like regular Crusoes. What fun it will be to tell our adventures!"

"I will keep a diary," said Cecil.

"I have already begun mine," said Tom. "We will publish it when we get home."

"And Angus shall draw the pictures," said Bob. "Yes, we will make a beautiful book of it. Arthur shall choose the binding."

"Don't choose blue, Arthur. You are rather given to blues," said Tom.

"Tom," said Bob, "don't you chaff Arthur. He is very sensitive, and I daresay he will turn out as well as you. You are merely *green*."

"All right, Bob. I like to see a little boy stick up for his big brother! Arthur shall choose any colour he pleases. Red as a rose, or the aurora, if he likes."

"No disputes," said Cecil. "Tom, you are too 'cheeky,' too rash, and if you had Arthur's perseverance you would be much better. Careless Bob is quite right, and I will not have Arthur worried."

"It sha'n't be teased then, poor thing," laughed Tom Tracey. "Its cousin will protect it from its brother; he will. Catchee, catchee, baby!"

"Tom!" said Cecil.

"Cecil!" said Tom.

"Shut up. Come, no nonsense. We have had enough chaff. We must stick together. Angus, what do you say?"

"Quite right, Cecil. But Tom was only in fun, and we know his heart is in the right place. Now, boys, off we go to breakfast, and then have a little 'gunning,' as the captain calls it."

"Without a 'smell dog,' as he said the other day. Funny term—'smell dog.'"

"He meant a dog of scent. Never mind now," continued Angus with a sudden pang as he remembered the pretty schooner. "Breakfast!"

But breakfast was not so easily procured. The absence of fire was the first thing to be remedied. Most of the driftwood had been already floated away by the tidal wave, but some fortunately remained to serve for a fire. It was some time, however, before they got the wood alight, and then it burned slowly.

With the energetic assistance of Andrews the bear-steaks were at length cooked, and to a certain extent relished. But white bear is not so nice as the other species, and the boys did not care very much for it. It was at anyrate palatable, and after a little brandy which had been poured over a lump of ice which was melted, the meal terminated.

"Now mind," said Angus, "we must not stray too far. If we keep the berg in sight we shall manage very well. I think it would be better to leave some one behind."

There was a silence. No one volunteered.

"Very well," continued Angus. "Let us all go together. Only, mind, no waste of ammunition."

"The tide is falling, I believe," said Cecil. "The ice is not so high up as it was."

"Very likely," answered Andrews. "But we can always return to our little island."

The whole party landed in safety and endeavoured to scale the forbidding dark snow-sprinkled rocks. The whole country appeared quite barren and deserted. Not a trace of any game except birds, and these, wild geese and sea-fowl, passed wheeling around or sat on the rocks in crowds.

"Seems a shame to fire at them," said Cecil; "they appear so tame."

"We must have some food," replied Angus. "We will fire in turn. I will begin if you like, or will you?"

"You begin," they said.

So Angus fired and killed three birds, which he picked up. Then Cecil had a shot and killed a couple,

and so on, till nearly a dozen birds and a quantity of eggs collected by Andrews were carefully packed away.

"We will hide these near the shore till we return. Thus we shall save trouble."

So a *cache* was made and the provisions were hidden from the depredations of any wandering bear or attendant fox; for the fox often attends the bear, actuated by "cupboard love." The bear kills seals and catches fish; the fox lives on the remains of the feast.

The party led by Angus continued their investigation, and at length reached a considerable elevation of the bleak cliffs. The prospect was not cheering by any means, and nothing was in sight but snowy ice blocks or towering bergs now sailing down along the southern shore more rapidly on the falling tide.

After a survey which resulted in disappointment the young adventurers were about to descend towards the ice-raft, as they called their floating island, when Cecil called the attention of the rest to the great iceberg which had stranded near the shore, and by blocking up the mouth of the little creek seemed to shut the adventurers off completely from all communication with the Straits.

"Angus, this means imprisonment, I am afraid," whispered "Master Sarcil" to his "chum." "If this old berg has really stranded then we shall have to climb over it to reach the water."

"Blocked in!" said Arthur mournfully.

"Block tin! block ice, you mean," cried Bob the irrepressible. "We can easily clear that. I should like to climb an iceberg!"

"You will have a chance presently then," replied Angus rather sternly. "I am afraid fate is against us."

"We shall manage, I daresay," said Tom. "We had better descend into our raft again. Luckily the fog is clearing rapidly, and we may sight the *Annie*."

"Even supposing she is not burned, however, will

"Captain Morris see us behind that ice mountain?" replied Arthur as he descended.

"We will hoist a flag," said Tom.

"We have not got a flag," remarked Andrews quietly. "Besides, it will be no joke to climb that berg, young gentleman."

Then a sad silence fell upon the whole party. The situation was becoming more and more serious; dangers thickened around them as rapidly as the fog; and when they all arrived upon their "raft" they found it was stranded, and the immense blue and white iceberg had also grounded with the falling tide, and now remained fixed, immovable, on the edge of the cake ice, which was rapidly gathering around the monster's base, and extending the barrier between the adventurers and the open water.

This ice was scarcely consolidated. The breaking up had fully set in. During a portion of the long day, doubtless, the floe would freeze; but the mid-day sun and the terrible tides would again disintegrate the field of ice, and smash it up into lumps and hummocks which would be carried away on the ebb, and hasten to the Atlantic with the bergs which had already begun

"To bow their heads,
And plunge and sail in the sea."

This exodus of the bergs, the annual migration of the ice, is amongst the most wonderful phenomena of nature. An entirely new life then seems to break in upon the snowy regions. All the winter time, when the iron hand has been laid heavily on the earth, darkness covers everything, save the twinkling "diamonds in the sky," or when the magnificent aurora flashes its purple and gold and glorious fireworks over the firmament. But some morning a tiny gleam is observable by sharp eyes on the horizon. This streak

is watched day after day by many anxious faces; the light is again coming! Day at last! Yes; after a while a brilliant line of light is sent quivering over the dark sky, touching the higher hills, and gently beaming upon the frozen ground as it dies away. It is the sun; but he soon hides his brilliant face, which our eyes, thankful as they are, cannot bear to look at yet, so accustomed are we to darkness and the stars.

But next time the sun returns, he remains a little longer. He creeps up higher and higher, and finally, in our long summer, mounts grandly into the sky and remains seated in his majesty unconcealed. His warmth has, long ere this culminating point has been reached, affected the ice and snow. Rivers and brooks have made their way through the snows and the flocs. Then the continual reports tell us that the *débâcle* has set in. Masses which two days previous would have defied an army, now are rent by one touch of nature's fingers!

The sea is born again! The waves are aroused from their wintry sleep beneath the ice. Glad in the sunshine they leap, and play, and tumble over each other, lifting the ice which had so lately imprisoned them high in the warmer air. "Ha, ha! it is our turn now," they seem to say, as they seize immense ice-blocks, and toss them like corks from and to each other in boisterous leap-frog. Yes, it is the turn of the tide now in every sense. The ice is broken; the sun pours down laughing on the scene. The birds come in thousands; build, and rear their young, and then the iceberg fleet, a grander squadron than man ever built, puts out to sea, but never to return!

A grand sight indeed! Such a fleet, save perhaps at the Antipodes, is never seen. The Arctic Armada starts, it may be in storm, it may be in calm; but the Word has gone forth, and the ice fleet, the Alabaster Mountains, the Palaces of Crystal, the azure and white

Cathedrals of the north, tinged with blue and opal—all brilliant and fantastic, sail out to sea! The herbage timidly peeps up to look. Tiny flowers thrust up their heads to gaze upon the retreating fleet of Admiral Winter, or watch the titanic conflict of the bergs, as King Æolus sends his forces to encounter them!

The winds break and scatter the bergs; the waves toss them until the lofty spires totter and fall. The air, which has been so long imprisoned, whistles gladly as it is released from its cold cells; the great mountain tops fall and float deeper, then sink down, down beneath the deep; for summer is at hand, and will take no denial. The ice fleet has sailed away for eternity!

These were the sights which appealed to our adventurers as they came down the cliffs. The roar of the water, the crashing of the ice, the hustling of the hummocks impressed them, and they felt how puny man is after all.

When the boys had reached the stranded island or raft of ice, they discovered to their dismay that the danger was even greater than they had anticipated. The great iceberg, instead of following its friends as a well-conditioned berg ought to have done, had got caught in an eddy, and giddily turned back up the Straits. Had it been content to proceed a little further up, the slackening tide would have taken it out again, and in time it would have fallen in with congenial glacial society and gone out to sea.

But, as I have remarked in my little wanderings, there is a degree of coolness about icebergs which at times tends to isolate them from their friends. I must confess that I have never in paintings—not even in Mr. Bradford's beautiful pictures of the Icy World—seen two icebergs together. There is to my mind a want of warmth—a kind of selfishness—surrounding your average berg which is not to be imitated. Yet

such is the inconsistency of humanity, and the consistency of icebergs, that they are exceedingly attractive to man, and even to each other, particularly to the younger members of this grand old family whose ancestry dates from a period far anterior to Adam. But you cannot trust an iceberg. I am sorry to say anything to lower them in public estimation; but my experience of them is they are very "slippery customers" indeed; occasionally very high and mighty, and apt to assume an overbearing attitude towards mortals.

Tom and Bob at anyrate arrived at this conclusion, for I find an entry to the above effect in the diary, from which this tale is principally derived, initialed by those lads. So that is the outcome of the sublime and beautiful sight which met their youthful gaze before they reached the level ice, on which they proceeded to make themselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

The great ice mountain behind which the "raft" had grounded, almost entirely shut out the view of the Straits; consequently the chances of deliverance were greatly lessened. There was one side of the berg, however, which overhung the cliffs, and formed almost an arch. Beneath this natural bridge the open water and intervening ice could be reached. When that overhanging block fell, then all communication with the outer world would be cut off until the iceberg took its departure.

This was Angus' opinion, and unless the next high tide floated the berg off, the chances of escape for our adventurers were very limited indeed. Of course they *did* escape, or this tale of their adventures would never have been written. But the troubles they had, and the adventures, and the—well, I must not anticipate the narrative, else no one will read to the end, even if they got as far as this chapter. But the following chapters "are much the most exciting," Tom says. . . .

So a council was held, and it was determined to construct a shelter, a kind of house, could the materials only be procured, which would command a view of the Straits. In this watch-house two of the party were always to be stationed on the look-out, while the others hunted, fished, or explored the vicinity. The first step was of course to procure wood to build the watch-house.

"An ice house would be no use," said Andrews in reply to Tom's suggestion. "In the autumn it would be all very well, for the frost would harden it and the snow would keep us warm, but with summer coming on we should be in danger."

"Our house would melt away from us—I see," said Bob. "Well, then, we must find some wood. It's precious cold under this great berg, though it is some distance off too. Let us go and look for driftwood, Tom."

Tom and Bob, the inseparables, or Pylades and Orestes, as Cecil called them, went off together, and very soon found themselves on the edge of their little ice-island.

"There is no wood here, Tom, except me—not a scrap. We must continue our search. What do you say to crossing the ice to the berg and ascertaining whether there is any chance of escape?"

"I don't mind," replied Tom. "We can easily reach the berg, and we may find something after all. Come along. I hope that bridge won't tumble down upon us. What a lovely arch the ice makes! It nearly touches the black cliffs—see there!"

"Beautiful, but depressing," remarked his cousin. "Let us get on. Never say die!"

CHAPTER XIII

TOM AND BOB MAKE A TOUR OF DISCOVERY—THE ICEBERG—THE WOLF—BURIED ALIVE—A SAD SCENE.



OM TRACEY and Bob Wood had not much difficulty in crossing the ice which separated their island from the main berg. Unnoticed the lads proceeded, sometimes leaping from one hummock to another, and generally pursuing a smooth course towards their gigantic neighbour.

But when they came nearer they perceived that the berg had grounded in deep water. They had not thought of that. The tide was low now; but still the extent of open sea, smooth and sheltered though it was, forbade them to advance. There were several heavy floating blocks of ice in this water, but no certain means of reaching the iceberg.

"I call this a sell," remarked Bob. "After all our trouble we are stumped by a ridiculous little belt of water. It would not do to swim, or I would."

"You would be frozen to death," said his cousin. "We must go back, I am afraid."

"How far do you think it is to the berg?" asked Bob.

"About half a mile—perhaps less."

"Oh, much less," replied Bob. "Can't we make a pontoon bridge across?"

"How do you mean?"

"By piling ice-blocks, or rather by joining them. There are plenty we can move. If we put them close together they will freeze at once and make floating stepping-stones. Let us try: Our gloves will save our hands."

"If we had only a pole we could punt, or perhaps with a pair of oars pull across."

"Oh yes! If—if—if! No, Tom, we must help ourselves. We *must* reach that iceberg. Suppose the schooner is in the Straits and waiting, what grand news we shall carry home!"

Tom yielded, and the lads with some considerable exertion rolled a large mass of ice into the little lagoon, and beheld it float with much complacency.

"There is the first stepping-stone to success," remarked Tom; "now for another."

"We shall arrive there in about a year at this rate," remarked his cousin. "Hollo! here's a prize!"

He hurried away and in a moment returned with an oar, which he had perceived floating some little distance off at the edge of the ice.

"This is splendid," he remarked when he had secured it. "I believe it is one of the oars belonging to our boat. Now we will just scull our ice-block across, or paddle with our gun-stocks."

"Rather dangerous work. Suppose we slip off?"

"Suppose we don't?—that is what we have to think of," replied Bob recklessly. "Now, jump on, Tom; I will navigate the ship of ice. Look out!"

The two lads then actually mounted the block of ice, which was sufficiently buoyant to float with their united weights. A groove was hacked out at one end by their knives, and the opposite end quickly chipped into the rude semblance of a "cutwater." All this took time, but in a shorter interval than might have been expected the icy bark was making its way, impelled

by Bob in the stern, towards the gigantic iceberg some three hundred yards away.

"This is worse than the Shillies, Tom," remarked his cousin. "If we capsize here we shall be drowned to a certainty."

"I don't much like the Shillies when the spring tide is rushing up. I remember once with Annie, she and I were alone, and we attempted to pull up the fall under the bank. We got across stream in against the bank, and precious near went over. I wish she had come here with us. How she would have enjoyed the ice and this grand old berg!"

"I wish she were here with all my heart, but I don't think it would quite do. Girls are in the way on these occasions. Now, Tom, we are getting on beautifully. Our boat behaves well. There! Now, where shall we land?"

"On the 'beach,'" replied Tom, laughing

"But it is all cliff. Did you ever see anything grander? Upon my word I am glad we came!"

The aspect of the berg was beautiful, yet terrible in the extreme. The icy cliffs were so forbidding, the falling of fragments so incessant, that any landing seemed impossible. The mass rose nearly a hundred feet above the water; one side, the eastward, had bent down; an immense pinnacle had apparently broken off, and the base remained overhanging a projecting spur of the land. But the space between the shore and the berg, even at the point nearest contact, was ever so much wider than appeared from the mainland. From the ice-island the berg and the cliff seemed almost touching, but they were many yards apart in reality.

The boys coasted the berg quietly.

The sides were almost perpendicular, and any attempt to climb up would end in a fall; and the fall, in death by drowning. It seemed an impossible undertaking. The ice-block kept close to the berg, and would have

united with it had not Bob fended it off, pushing alongside at the same time, looking for a creek.

"No chance," said Tom. "We must return."

"Let us try to get round it," said Bob. "Faint heart never won fair lady. Off she goes!"

The frail conveyance—if conveyance it can be called—was pushed off, and the lads poled the ice-lump round the berg. Tom aided his cousin, and when they had reached the western end they found a shelving kind of channel up the side of the glacier—a "couloir" we may term it in mountaineering phrase. This couloir was studded with lumps of ice which had fallen as they became detached from the mass above. By these our young adventurers hoped to be able to ascend the berg. The landing at this place was by no means difficult. The ice-block was pushed in close. It touched the "mainland" of ice, and in a moment the boys had stepped upon the glacial mass.

"Here we are! Well, it seems like our Swiss experiences after all," cried Tom. "Do you remember the *Grand Mulets*, Bob?"

"Rather; and that wretched ladder when we got up the glacier. It was nothing to this, though."

"Shove the oar in between the boat and the shore," laughed Tom, "else our ship will freeze to the mainland, and there will be no retreat for us. By the by, have you any idea what time it is?"

"About bed-time, I fancy—yes, just ten P.M. We must be quick. I had no idea we had been so long coming out. There's something moving up there. Is it a bear?"

"Hope not! I have no fancy for a bear here. I believe it is a small one, though. Hand me the gun. I'll give him a bullet. Oh, he's gone!"

"It was not a bear; I believe it was only a wolf—I would say a dog, only no dog could be here. Come, let us ascend," said Bob.

The ascent did not prove at all difficult. But when the cousins had climbed a considerable distance, an animal—the same they had seen—rushed out at them with a growl. It at once uttered what sounded like a bark; but Tom was ready. Without losing his presence of mind he levelled the gun, loaded with ball, and fired.

The intruder with a yell of pain fell back, and, rolling from the icy surface, fell off the berg sixty feet into the smooth water at the base of the ice.

"Well done, Tom! You are a splendid shot. I am sure I should have been too frightened. I was rather 'skeared' to have taken aim. Was it a wolf?"

"I fancy so," replied Tom rather proudly. "Yes, Bob, there is nothing like presence of mind with wild animals. I think I shall never feel afraid again. Hollo!—listen!"

The subdued sound of angry voices broke upon their ears—guttural sounds proceeding as if from cavernous recesses.

"I say, Bob," whispered his cousin, "there are savages here. The ice-bank reflects their voices. Let us be off. They will catch us, perhaps. Come!"

"But surely—"

"Quick, quick! I don't so much mind a wild beast, but a wild man is awful! Suppose they catch us and make us slaves! No, Bob; let us be off. They have heard the gun and are coming in our direction. Here they are."

Bob waited for no more. In a few minutes, and before the "savages" could catch a glimpse of them, the lads were recklessly flying down the icy descent. They found their block riding safely at anchor. In a minute they had leaped upon it and were pushing hard under the shelter of the iceberg towards "home."

The men who had heard the shot came to the top of the "couloir," looked down, and then at each other.

They conversed in low tones, were evidently greatly puzzled, and by their gestures showed they also were angry; and some curious and strongly accentuated words escaped from the elder of the pair of "savages" as they turned away.

The boys were greatly alarmed. The sun was declining and the brief night was already at hand. The tide, too, was beginning to rise, and the wind commenced to moan in a sad and mournful manner. Long wisps of cloud came up, and the night, or rather the early day, promised to be a stormy one.

"If we cannot reach our floating island we shall be in a pretty pickle," said Tom, as he laboured at the oar. The ice-block made little progress, and darkness rapidly gained on the twilight.

"It can't be really dark," cried Bob—"twilight only, unless the clouds come up."

The clouds did come up, with the tide and wind. Tom had no alternative but to guide the ice-block to the nearest floe, and the boys disembarked.

"Now, hurry as fast as you can, Bob. If the tide rises and knocks the ice about we shall be killed to a certainty, or drowned."

"Much the same in the end," muttered Bob. "But come along. I'm glad you killed that wolf."

"So am I," responded Tom with some pride. "I wish he had attacked us, we might have had a fine fight!"

"I am quite content," replied his cousin. "Look out, here's the tide!"

It came on at a tremendous pace, rushing into the creek with great violence, and shaking the ice something with the same effect as a carpet is shaken on the stage to represent a rolling sea. Great hummocks of ice were lifted and crashed against other hummocks with a terrible roar and crunching which it is impossible to describe. The "cakes" rose and fell; some

were lifted bodily and thrown on the hummocks. Spray came dashing up, and some pieces of floe-ice were lifted on to the cliffs and left high and dry twenty feet above the normal level of the Straits.

It certainly was a fearful experience. Bob and Tom felt quaking mentally and bodily. Their feet gave way, the ice upheaved, and finally they were thrown violently down, a huge mass of ice being cast almost a-top of them. But it fortunately fell so as to cover but not injure them. They were buried in the ice.

"We shall be frozen to death, Tom," said Bob as he attempted to move the block—"what *shall* we do? Oh I wish we had remained safe with Angus. Oh dear, oh dear! It is terrible to die like this!"

"Die! Oh Bob, you don't really think we shall die, do you! I have never thought of death *really*. I cannot imagine it. What shall we do? Are you cold?"

"Not so cold as I expected. Perhaps we can move the block. The heat of our bodies may loosen it and send it off. Look, it rests on that bit. If we melt that with our breath it will fall."

"Yes; fall upon us. Look, it is rocking!"

"It is a tidal wave. Wait. Oh Tom, Tom! It is very hard to die. I am getting colder and colder. I shall be frozen to death! Let us say our prayers, Tom!"

"Yes, let us!" replied Tom; "we can't kneel down, Bob. This is awful; I can't pray rightly. But—oh mother, mother!"

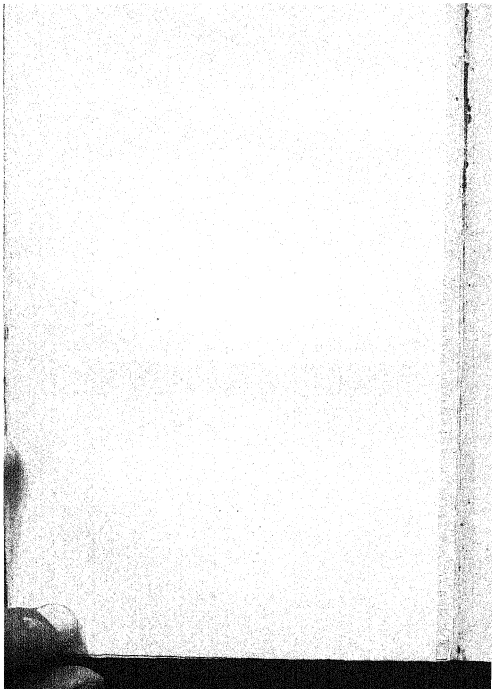
The poor lad fairly broke down as he thought of home and his mother, father, and sisters. Bob burst into tears also.

"Oh I am getting numbed, Tom," he said. "Come close to me. Let us keep warm—closer!"

"I am quite close, old boy; dear old Bob! To think after all that you and I should be here dying—together.



"OH, TOM, TOM! IT IS VERY HARD TO DIE!"



It seems all a dream. I am sure it is a dream. But I am quite sleepy, and not *quite* so cold now. At least I don't feel it so much. Are you sleepy, Bob?"

"Yes," muttered Bob; "I feel more comfortable, Tom. What shall we tell them when we get home? I wish they had sent us some blankets. My bed is quite cold."

"Bob, Bob, rouse up," exclaimed Tom suddenly, as a gleam of awakened intelligence came upon him. His cousin's incoherent words had struck strangely upon his numbed senses, but he had strength to rally. "Let us shout!"

"Let me alone," whispered Bob; "I am very sleepy. Good-night. They are all fast asleep at home now. No. I see them!"

"See who?" asked Tom, struggling to rouse himself, and his younger companion. "See who?"

"Auntie and Annie. There's uncle coming along the meadow. Oh, yes, on the path by the river by the stile. Do you remember, Cecil? Cecil, I see you! We walked there with Annie and Edie one day, and the haymakers laughed at us! I see you all now. Kiss me, father."

"Rouse up, Bob. Poor Uncle Wood is dead."

"Father is there," replied Bob. "I see him. He is calling; listen!"

Tom listened intently, all the while endeavouring to arouse his dying cousin, though he felt his own powers failing rapidly.

He prayed fervently for assistance, as Bob's weary head sank upon his shoulder, and pressed him against the side of the ice dungeon.

Suddenly a faint hollo struck upon his departing senses. Was it fancy, or not? He raised Bob's head and kissed his lips. They were cold; his cheeks and hands were white and numbed.

"Oh, he is dead; he is dead! My dear, dear Bob!

It is cruel, *cruel* to have left us like this. Bob, my dearest old fellow. Bob!"

A weary sigh was the only answer; the head fell back, and the blue lips murmured, "Mother; auntie! father—T—"

He was silent. The word "Tom" died on his lips. The eyes were closed. The intense cold was rapidly doing its work. The lads were buried in the ice—*buried alive!*

Again and again the stronger lad kissed his dying cousin, and endeavoured to arouse him. Three times he succeeded in imparting some semblance of life into the face which had become almost rigid, and oh, so deadly, painfully, drawn and white!

"Bob!" he screamed; "Bob! Help, help!"

The faint hollo again became audible, and Tom Tracey did his utmost to respond. "Bob, here is help," he screamed as he rubbed his freezing hands upon Bob's already frozen fingers.

Another shout. This time there was no mistake. Tom called as loudly as he could—that was indeed but faintly—and as a last resource, supporting his cousin with one failing arm, he lifted his gun and discharged it through the aperture between the blocks of ice—his prison!

A louder shout replied. In a few minutes feet were heard in the dim and fading distance as it seemed, but in reality they were approaching. Tom heard little more; his strength was exhausted. He fell against the ice-block—kissed his cousin for the last time—and with his freezing lips murmured a prayer for pardon. Ah!

A crash, a shout, and tearing and rending of ice, and then a rush. Something scorching hot upon his lips; the skin peeled off, he thought. Air. His hands and body began to tingle all over; a great pain was in his heart, and he longed to be let alone. He turned, saw a man beside him—Angus!

"Tom, can you hear me?"

He could only move a little. "Yes," he nodded.

"Thank God!" . . .

Then a long silence. Then he was moved about and given something to drink. By degrees sensation returned to his frame. He could see again. There was a fire; yes, and the sun, and "something white." What is that?

"What is that? Where is Bob?"

"Bob!" Then a deep silence.

"Is that Bob? *Is—is—he—dead?*"

There was no answer, at least Tom Tracey heard none. A confused murmur, a sound of water in his ears, a singing in the brain. He fell forward insensible, and lay prone beside the white thing by the fire which they had told him was Bob! . . .

CHAPTER XIV.

BOB'S DANGER—THE "WOLF" IS RECOGNIZED—AN UN-
FORTUNATE CONCLUSION—TOM'S SURMISES—HOPE!



THE terrible experience Tom had undergone with his cousin threatened to deprive him of life. When he saw what he believed to be the dead body of poor Bob, lying white and cold before the fire wrapped in what his dim sight told him was a winding-sheet, he fainted, and it was some time before animation was again restored.

By that time Bob had been carried into the den now converted into a lodging; and there he was tended by Andrews and Cecil with the greatest solicitude and kindness. All that Angus' experience could suggest, all that Andrews could do was done; and after some time Cecil had the intense happiness to perceive signs of returning animation in Robert Wood.

It was a sad and painful awakening. The brain was still clouded; the senses wandered still amongst the ice-blocks and would not be recalled. Vainly Cecil spoke to the lad. Bob's mind, though gradually returning to its right balance, swayed between home and travel; sometimes dipping into the far past, and again suddenly rising to the events of the last few hours, in leaps and bounds along the paths of memory. They watched him, and waited in patience and faith.

"He is much better, Andrews," whispered Cecil.

Andrews shook his head slowly in answer.

"He is recovering, surely?" said Cecil anxiously. "Don't you hear him talking about us in his sleep?"

"Yes, sir; but if you listen you will understand that his mind is all sideways or upsey-down-like. The poor lad is mixing up things, you'll hear."

Cecil listened, kneeling beside his cousin, and heard him whispering of the old places near home; of the Taw and Saunton, of Annie and the cricket; of Fremington and happy summer days. Then he would cry out for Tom to save him from the ice, and shout, "Glad you killed the wolf, Tom; a good shot!" After some time he would again lie quiet, apparently exhausted, and go to sleep, or fall into a stupor.

All this while the ice was rising, cracking, or falling, according to the tides. The wind rose and brought a snow-storm once, and great flakes fell, whitening the dark cliffs and filling up the crevices. But the den was large enough for all, and the adventurers kept warm. Sleep was induced in Bob's case by every available means, and one morning, three days after the grim adventure recorded in the last chapter, he awoke sane and sensible!

With sincere thankfulness and a subdued joy Angus and Cecil, who were there watching Bob, spoke to him. They had tears in their eyes as they listened for his answer, and when it came gently and affectionately, with a request for something to drink, it was as much as Cecil could do to restrain himself from actual weeping.

"Thank Heaven, dear Bob, you are all right again. We have had an awful time!"

"Have I been very bad?" inquired the boy at last, after gazing with some astonishment at his surroundings—the bear-skins, the snowy cave-like refuge, his sleeping companions—"Have I been very bad? I nearly died, didn't I?"

"We thought you were dead," replied Angus, "but, thank Heaven, your constitution and our prayers, with what little help we could render, pulled you back from death's door. Now we must try to get you strong again."

"How is Tom? Is he safe?" inquired Bob. "I remember he kissed me and bade me good-bye. We were dying, Cecil, I think. How did we get out?"

Cecil told him, and then Bob lay very quiet for a while as Angus informed him how they had missed them and searched. How he and Andrews had heard the shot fired at the "wolf," and had hurried over the ice. How they had seen the lads come to the floe, and then the tide tossed the ice about until the searchers quite lost sight of them. They called to them, but heard no response to guide them until the gun was fired, and then the party hurried up. They arrived just in time. Tom recovered pretty soon, and Angus said was nearly well again. "But as you see, Bob, you have alarmed us dreadfully," he added. "Now the least you can do, dear old fellow, is to get well as soon as ever you can."

Bob promised to do his best, and he did. By the time the weather cleared and the sun had got quite hot—too hot, indeed, on the ice—Bob was sufficiently recovered to crawl about, and to see the place which had so nearly been his grave. Tom and he were greater chums than ever, if such an association were possible. Pylades and Orestes, David and Jonathan, and all other such affectionate partnerships were put in the shade, and in this affection they in a measure changed each other.

Tom had hitherto borne, and indeed had done his best to accentuate the character he had earned of a "cheeky," brave, rash, and rather unpersevering youth, with talent which he seldom exercised in his lessons, but which he lavished upon less important matters,

generally something quite foreign to his parents' wishes. He could make a boat and sail her. He could play any game, and he learned the violin. He had a drawing-room reputation as a skilful manipulator of cards for conjuring purposes, and he must have spent hours and hours in practice. But lessons—the *business* of his life—he avoided; although when he *did* apply, he learned well and rapidly. He had plenty of ballast, but it was ill stowed.

Robert, his cousin, had more application, but not so much talent as Tom. Bob, as cheerful, utterly careless; fond of bad puns and practical jokes. Nothing was too far-fetched for him, and in one sense—not the religious sense—nothing was "sacred," old ladies' pets, old gentlemen's manners, habits, and conversation—anything in fact was turned to his amusement by practical joking or otherwise. He certainly worked in school-time and remembered what he had learned, but he was thoughtless, and at times cruel in consequence.

These lads now interchanged traits of character. The terrible experiences they had undergone made them thoughtful, and as they recovered their old elasticity of manner the excess of animal spirits which had dictated many acts to the discomfort of friends was toned down, and they each unconsciously absorbed something from the other to their mutual advantage.

"So you shot a wolf, old fellow?" said Angus on the third day, addressing Tom.

"Yes, a fine black fellow. He came rushing at us."

"Barking," added Bob feebly.

"Barking! My dear Bob, wolves, as a rule, certainly do not bark. They howl and growl—a barking wolf is a creature about as fabulous as the unicorn," said Angus.

"It seemed to bark," replied Bob; "but as well as I can remember we did not wait to discuss the question. We simply bolted after Tom had fired; for we heard men's voices—savages!"

"Savages! On the iceberg, Bob?"

"Yes, were not they, Tom? Tell him, I can't."

"It is quite true, Angus. Andrews, did *you* ever hear of savages—Esquimaux savages, perhaps—who lived on icebergs?"

"No, sir, not actually living on them. They may have landed in their kyacks after a bear. But the ice is hardly broken up enough yet for kyacks here."

"Well, we heard voices—gruff unpleasant tones, very angry, and then we bolted as quickly as we could. There *were* men on the iceberg."

"I wish we had known this earlier. We might have been assisted. We found the remains of the *Annie's* boat and some charred logs which made us a fire, fortunately for you. I shall never forget that night. The iceberg rocked and threatened to fall, and your savages must have been nicely alarmed. Then the wind got up, and the snow-storm came on. So they must be about dead by this time, poor creatures!"

"They might have escaped in their kyacks," said Tom. "Shall we go across to-morrow and see? I am quite fit again."

"Wait until to-morrow comes. I am only too anxious to leave here and find a way to quit this coast. If we could reach the berg, and in anyway command a view of the Straits, we shall surely see a ship which would take us off and land us in Labrador. Time is passing."

"And the Talisman is still undiscovered," said Cecil. "We have certainly had our share of adventure so far."

"I have had quite enough of the Arctic World," said Bob.

"And nearly quitted it," said Tom, putting his arm affectionately round his cousin's neck. "Well, chief, shall we pilot you to-morrow?"

"We will see," replied Angus. "Here comes Arthur,

and Andrews with him. They are carrying something. Game of some kind."

The pair came nearer and nearer—Andrews and Arthur, bearing some animal tied feet together and slung upon a gun which they held between them. It was a shaggy animal about the size of a wolf or larger. All eyes were directed to it.

"It's Tom's wolf, I believe," exclaimed Bob, raising himself. "There, I told you so. It must have dropped into the water and been washed up on to the ice."

"Yes, that is my great wolf," said Tom. "Killed dead with one barrel—not bad, Angus!"

"By no means," said the lieutenant; "but it seems to me your wolf is no ordinary one. Surely—no, it cannot be!"

"What 'cannot' be, Angus? What *do* you mean?" said Tom impatiently.

Angus Fowler made no answer. His eyes were fixed upon Arthur and Andrews, who were now near. The former then called out:

"Here's your wolf, and a nice thing you've done, Tom!"

"What!" cried Tom, a little alarmed.

"Look at that," cried Arthur with some disdain. "You're a nice sportsman, I must say! Oh Tom, Tom, you've shot a dog!"

"A dog!" exclaimed Tom. "Well, I *am* an ass!"

No member of the party contradicted him, and soon a peal of laughter, in which invalid Bob heartily joined, succeeded. The laugh did them all good.

"Oh Tom, Tom, you've killed a poor Esquimaux dog! No wonder your 'wolf' barked," cried Angus. "Eh, Andrews?"

"No wonder, sir," replied Andrews gravely.

"Why, man, there is nothing to look so very funeral about! The poor beast was killed at once," said Tom hastily, feeling rather annoyed with Andrews for taking the matter so seriously.

"Yes, sir, he was killed at once," remarked Andrews dryly.

Angus looked at the man surprised in his turn, but said nothing to him. Turning to Tom he said:

"You have distinguished yourself, Tom Tracey, and like the volunteer you have 'shot the dog.' Well, your wolf is only a dog after all! A mere dog—an Esquimaux—"

"Not an Esquimaux, sir," said Andrews with the same grave face and quiet manner.

"No more it is," cried Arthur. "Poor thing! It's a 'Labrador' Newfoundland, a fine animal too—why, my goodness!" he added, turning pale.

"What, what? Anything wrong?" cried Cecil.

"Look here, Angus, Cecil, all. See! look! It's WASH! Our own dog! Oh, Tom, Tom, you've killed 'Washington,' Captain Morris' dog!"

A dead silence fell upon the lately merry party. Wash dead! killed by Tom Tracey in a panic. Then the men—the speakers whom the boys had heard—were perhaps Captain Morris and some of his crew, or perhaps George Hamilton! They had possibly gained the iceberg, after the burning of the *Annie*, and came with Wash to explore. The shot had deterred them, no doubt. The storm had kept them away since, and even had they been on the watch, the adventurers would scarcely have been distinguished, amid the huge hummocks thrown up by the tide! At such a distance, too, amid the snow, any signals would have remained unseen. The chance of meeting had been lost!

Tom felt terribly ashamed of himself. A dog was bad enough. But to have killed dear old Wash, taking the animal's joyous rush of recognition for the rush of a wild beast, was too much for him. Sorrow for his fault, and the haunting sense of ridicule to which he would always be subject, made him for one half minute wish he had died in the ice-chasm.

But better feelings succeeded. He dashed away the tell-tale evidences of deep mortification and said:

"I am awfully sorry I have made such a fool of myself. It can't be helped now. I cannot bring back the dear old dog to life. I am very sorry I acted on the spur of the moment."

"Under the circumstances," said Angus kindly, "you could scarcely be expected to pause. The mistake, boys, was in your going alone at all. But no one can deny Tom's bravery; though he was rash, yet he saved Bob's life, and we must forgive him the death of poor Wash."

Tom breathed freely again; Bob came and stood up beside him; Andrews led off with three cheers, and all were again in good spirits.

"How about the savages though?" remarked Arthur. "Andrews and I have been thinking that the men Tom heard—the men—"

"With the horrible voices," put in Cecil.

"Yes, the 'fearful savages,' *might* have been Captain Morris and George!"

"Not unlikely," mused Angus.

"Well, then," continued Arthur, "should not we make some attempt to find them? The whole crew may have perished—"

"Not if George and Captain Morris are alive," interrupted Cecil.

"Right, sir," assented Andrews. "Captain Morris, I know, would never desert his men."

"Nor would Mr. Hamilton either," said Angus.

"Yes, Arthur, we must endeavour to communicate with them. They may be watching on the seaward side of the berg for a ship."

"I wonder they have not landed here and found us," said Bob.

"My dear Bob, the storm, and our keeping in the den so much of late will quite account for our not

having been discovered. Besides, at the best of times, the fog has prevented any distant view."

"True, O king," replied Tom. "Well, let us set off. Shall we bury old Wash?"

"Yes, let us dig him a grave and put him in at once. To-morrow, if Bob can manage to get along, we will all try and mount the iceberg and find the savages."

"They will not hurt us, I hope," said Arthur. "Men with such fearful and terrible voices are dangerous, Tom, eh?"

"Very," replied Tom. "I am sometimes dangerous myself, and I am quiet enough."

Angus nodded at Arthur, who took the hint not to push Tom too far just then, and the party proceeded to excavate a hole in the snow, in which poor "Wash" might lie in peace.

Poor dog! killed when welcoming his young friends! It was a sad business. Tom wanted to put up an epitaph: "Wash, the most faithful of dogs, killed by a donkey;" but Angus preferred a piece of wood, on which was simply cut the animal's name and the date. Andrews with his knife performed this task, and burned the letters with a heated nail which he forced from a log of timber.

Thus poor old "Washington" was buried in the snow as deeply as he could be laid. "Whether his grave will ever be seen again," writes Tom in his diary, "I cannot tell; but if anyone should see the place, will he please put a stone on the mound to keep the poor dog's remains from the bears and the foxes." I quote Tom's own words so as to have the greater weight with our readers, although I have small hopes that anyone will now land in the place; and besides, I fear poor "Wash" has been disinterred by the white bears long ago. Poor "Wash!" He was indeed a faithful animal, and well deserved the praises which he always received living, and the regret of all now he is dead.

They were all very sad "after the funeral," as Bob calls it, and could talk of nothing but old "Wash." The evening came on, but darkness did not, and, as the following day promised to be warm and bright, arrangements were made betimes for an expedition across the ice. The warmest wraps were put on. Bears' flesh and birds' eggs were carried. The little brandy that remained was carefully husbanded; some poles were rudely fashioned for the assistance of the explorers, and the time chosen for the start was when the tide was ebbing.

The morning was lovely. The cliffs and ice-blocks sparkled until the eyes were quite dazzled by the glare. Many shifts were resorted to to temper this glare, but nothing very satisfactory was accomplished. At length Angus, who, as an old campaigner, carried a veil, managed to divide this, and with some pieces of string to fasten the strips of gauze across the eyes of each person who had not "goggles." The tremendous glare, which might have caused snow-blindness, was thus mitigated, and the travellers proceeded in greater comfort, occasionally shading their eyes with their hands as an additional precaution.

They made their way across the hummocks with much care. Andrews attended upon Bob, who got on splendidly, considering. Tom was all right again, and went on ahead with Angus. Arthur and Cecil came scrambling last of all, chatting about home and friends in England. But the great conferences were in the evenings, when Angus and Cecil would talk of the Traceys and the jolly party at Pilton and at Ro-borough; of the old-time dances in the Assembly Rooms, the picnics at Clovelly; "Gallantry Bower," where he and Annie used to sit; and the great bare rock at the very end, which overlooked the sea, where he and his *fiancée* had let each other first guess the secret which possessed both their hearts.

These were the general subjects when the twilight cast a somewhat sentimental halo upon the absent ones. But now, in the sunlight, in the warm air amid the stern realities of life, the conversation turned upon Captain Morris and the shipwrecked crew of the *Annie*.

"Why do you think the *Annie* was burned, Angus?" asked Tom.

"Because we saw a great glare, and found the charred timber or planks, which we afterwards used for our fire."

"But these logs or planks might have been the same which I tried to make a fire with at first, and failed. They may have been washed away and re-carried to the ice."

"Tom," said Angus, "I am not sure whether I ought to kill you or praise you."

"Praise me first," said Tom. "I'd rather! But why kill me at all?"

"Because you keep us in such suspense. Why did not you tell us this before?"

"My dear Angus, you all know I was trying to light a fire and did not succeed. I never thought of the wood after, any more than you did. The *Annie* may not be burned after all. Is that likely?"

"Very likely; I think I see the whole error now. Captain Morris and 'Wash' had landed, and were searching for us. Your gun settled the question. They have sailed away, perhaps. Tom, I *must* kill you!"

"I daresay I deserve it," replied the young fellow with a sad smile. "Be merciful, Angus; and give me another chance."

"I will," replied the sailor. "Mind yourself in future."

CHAPTER XV.

THE ESQUIMAUX—A MESSAGE AND A REPLY—ON THE
BERG—A NARROW ESCAPE—THE SIGNAL-GUN.



WHEN the remainder of the party heard that there was a chance of the *Annie* being still cruising about they cheered lustily, and even Bob felt himself much better. It is needless to say that Tom came in for a good deal of "chaff," which he bore with exemplary patience—merely grimacing when a particularly pungent shaft of ridicule penetrated his assumed stoicism.

But when he had been punished enough, Arthur, who was developing quite a cheerful disposition under adversity, said:

"All right, you fellows, we have roasted Tom enough! Don't be down on your luck, Tom; we will stick to you. I daresay I would have done much worse."

"I don't think you could, Arthur; but it's done now. Nothing *could* be much worse," replied Tom humbly.

"Unless Bob made a pun on it," remarked Cecil. "That would be the *ne plus ultra* of wretchedness. I cannot conceive anything more horrible than being condemned to pass a Polar night with a fellow who made puns on everything. Horrible, horrible!"

"Very well, Cecil," said Bob smiling. "I'll pay you out! Wait until you are enveloped in a snow-drift or caught in the hummocks—I'll be revenged!"

"What will you do, Bobby boy?" asked Cecil, his face beaming with good-nature.

"I'll whisper puns in your ear until you lose consciousness, and your last waking idea shall be a joke," retorted Bob.

"Pleasant look-out," remarked Angus. "Your revenge is too horrible, Bob. Well, a truce to 'chaff.' Here we have our work cut out for us. Here is the berg—there is the water. The tide is out apparently; but I fancy the berg is no longer aground so fast. It seems to sway in the eddy. What shall we do, Andrews?"

"Well, sir, the tide won't flow for some time. Suppose we board her and explore. If she floats off we shall go up Straits on her and find the *Annie*, perhaps."

"But if she go down Straits?" said Cecil.

"Or turn over," suggested Arthur.

"Then we must take our chance," replied the sailor. "Bless ye, she won't 'turn turtle!'"

"Well, then, let us board her. Here we can very well manage a raft. Let us run back and pull up all the planks we can find, with the remainder of the food. Then we will board her."

"Oh, what a wretched joke!" said Bob. "Planks to board the iceberg! Oh Angus!"

"Quite unintentional, Bob. I didn't mean to poach on your preserves. Will you remain here with Arthur or Tom while we return and get the planks? We shall not be long."

"All right!" replied Bob. "I shall feel quite safe here with Tom. We have guns, and if any bears should turn up we will give an account of them."

"Or any wolves," remarked Arthur with a smile, as he turned away.

Then the elders of the party hurried back and left the cousins, "Pylades and Orestes," once more together.

"What do you think, Tom? Shall we ever get out of this place?"

"Certainly, Bob! Why not? There is nothing to prevent us if we can find the *Annie*. If not, we shall surely see an Esquimaux kyack, and the tribe will take us in. We shall be all safe in time," he muttered.

Then the conversation ended, and both lads remained silent, "wrapped up in their reflections and buried in thought," as Tom afterwards phrased it in his diary. But they were not destined to remain long undisturbed.

The sudden slipping of a piece of ice attracted Tom's attention, and turning round he beheld, not many yards away, a small black bear, which appeared almost as much amazed at the sight of the boys as they were at his sudden appearance.

"Hollo!" cried Tom. "Look out, Bob. We're in for it again. It's too bad. Here's a bear."

"Are you sure?" said Bob. "It's not a dog, is it?"

"Don't be silly," said Tom angrily. "We shall have a rough time. He's not very big, that's some consolation."

"He's black or nearly so, and he's walking on his hind legs. Shall we shoot him?" suggested Bob.

"Wait—he has slipped. It can't be a bear, Bob. Such bears are not found in Arctic Regions."

"I am glad to hear it," muttered Bob. "One is quite enough."

"It's not a bear at all. It's a man, Bob. I do believe it's an Esquimaux creature—a savage."

The "creature" was certainly rather surprising to the Europeans. It was dressed in a kind of bearskin jacket with a hood; wore breeches and moccasins; had no head-gear; and the face was swarthy, or dirty, perhaps both. The dress was clumsy-looking, but no doubt useful and warm; though sadly lacking the primitive whiteness of the bear-skin.

"I wish Angus was here, he could talk to it perhaps.

Arthur has learned some Esquimaux words, I think. What shall we do?" asked Bob.

"Let us make friends—nod at him—if the thing is a male animal. I believe one can hardly distinguish the sexes, their dress is so similar: nod at him—beckon him up."

The lads beckoned the Esquimaux visitor to approach, which he did, his little eyes gleaming, but not with fear or anger. He was not taller than Bob, that is to say about five feet two inches, but very fat and broad, with a large head in proportion to his body. When this human creature, who bore some resemblance to the bear whose pelt he had adopted, came nearer he paused and said a word which sounded like "pilletay."

"Pill to-day!" exclaimed Tom. "He thinks I am a doctor perhaps, seeing me with an invalid. Hollo! pill what?"

"Pilletay. Cob-loo-nak!" replied the Esquimaux with emphasis, and then he proceeded to indulge in pantomime, indicating something at a distance, at the same time crying out:

"Oomiak-sook—aunay—mai! Pilletay!"

"I don't quite follow you," remarked Tom. "Would you mind saying that again a little slower, Parlez-vous Français?"

The Esquimaux shook his head and said some word which sounded like Neg-a-may, at least that is the nearest spelling Tom can give it.

"Cob-loo-nak!" repeated the stranger, and he pointed to the boys.

Tom and Bob both nodded at a venture, and the Esquimaux man cheered up. They nodded again seeing it pleased him, and repeated the magic word, Cob-loo-nak!

"Tyma!" he said. "Tyma; chymo!"

"What o'clock, do you mean?" asked Bob, indicating his own watch.

"Chymo, chymo!" remarked the stranger. "Abb!"
"Keemi kimo dar, oh whar," quoted Tom from an old "nigger" melody. "Sing us a song. That's right."

But the man or woman merely nodded and again said, "Pilletay!"

"This is getting monotonous," remarked Tom in an undertone. "A pill a day is a something a year—what's the proverb? I wish I knew his wretched crack-jaw language. Here is Arthur. Hollo, here, Arthur! Esquimaux: talkee talkee, Chip chop cherry chow, Fol de rol di ri do, and all that. Come here, quick; here's a native—a live Husky, as the captain would call him."

Arthur came running up and gazed at the funny figure, who stared at him in return. Then Arthur made a sign, and pointing to the berg said, or tried to say in an interrogative tone:

"Igloo?"

"Na-mick," replied the man, who, by some special providence understood Arthur apparently, for his eyes twinkled. "Na-mick; kyack!"

"What on earth is he driving at, Arthur?" asked Bob, who was greatly interested in the beginning of this dialogue.

"I intended to ask him whether his home was near here; but he says *kyack*, which means canoe. Therefore I conclude he has come across the Strait, perhaps with news of the *Annie*."

"Well done, Arthur!" exclaimed Tom. "Try him again. He asked us for some pills."

"For what?" exclaimed Arthur.

"Pills, or a pill-a-day. What's that in Husky Busky language?"

"Oh, *pilleday*! That is *give me*. He wants a present, Tom, not a pill!"

"Well, I did wonder at his knowing English, and knowing it, asking for a pill of all things; but there is

no accounting for tastes. Esquimaux may prefer pills for all I know."

Then Arthur began to make signs, and the native said, "Cob-loo-nak!"

"Abb!" replied Arthur nodding.

"Tyma!" replied the Esquimaux pointing. "Oomiak-sook—aunay—ye meek!"

"Please interpret, Arthur, you are getting on first-rate. How did you learn this wonderful jargon?"

"He gives me to understand, at least I fancy he means to say, that there is a large vessel yonder in the Straits. Big ship far away over the water, is what he actually said."

"Pilletay," suggested the Esquimaux with much presence of mind.

"Give him something; an old knife if you have one."

"I have one," said Bob. "Take it, perhaps he will tell us something more. It's rather fun. Here, old fellow, here's a knife—what's that, eh?"

The native's eyes glistened with cupidity, and he grunted out Muck-hammok.

"A muck-hammock? Is knife all that?" asked Tom.

"Can't tell you," replied Arthur. "I suspect so. Chymo?" he asked the man.

"Abb," replied the Esquimaux, as he pulled out a dirty piece of fox-skin in which was wrapped a piece of paper. On the paper was writing, and the writing was in English, in George Hamilton's bold style.

"Hurrah!" cried Arthur. "You wretch," he continued, shaking his fist at the native, "why didn't you give me this at first? Do you see, Tom, why he wanted something? Captain Morris told him to ask for a present for the note, and he determined to have the present at once instead of waiting till afterwards."

"He naturally prefers the present to the future," said Bob. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

"Listen! Oh, here are Angus and the others. Good news, Angus! Captain Morris and George with the *Annie* are all safe. Hurrah!"

"How do you know?" said Angus breathlessly.

"This Esquimaux has brought us a letter. See, Captain Morris says he is at an island in the Strait—Savage Island he calls it, and cannot come up with this wind, so he has sent the message on the chance of finding us."

"Huzza! capital. We will join him," said Tom.

"How?" remarked Angus quietly.

"In the canoe," replied Tom.

Angus then said something to the Esquimaux, who shook his head, pointing to us all in turn. "Negga-mai," he said.

"The canoe will not hold us. We must wait until a boat can come up. I will write to the captain and tell him."

So a few words were written across the paper, which the Esquimaux concealed carefully, and nodding knowingly at once departed.

"How fortunate he found us!" said Arthur. "We might have been far away. It was thoughtful of the captain."

"Well, rather," said Cecil. "I do not think you younger ones have half realized the danger. We have been in daily peril of our lives, I know that. Haven't we, Angus?"

"Yes, indeed we have," replied the lieutenant gravely. "Andrews and I have been extremely anxious. Had not that berg posted itself there the tide would have carried us away into the ocean, perhaps—it is on the move now. The coming of the Esquimaux I regard as providential."

"What shall we do?" asked Cecil.

"Andrews, what do you say?" asked Angus of the sailor.

"Well, sir, it isn't for me to say; but I think we had better go on board the berg, for this reason, she'll drift us up on the tide. The *Annie* is up yonder, that heathen said, didn't he, sir? So we shall be taken off all the sooner by the captain."

"Suppose the iceberg turns upside down," said Arthur.

"You are always saying that, Arthur," remonstrated Tom. "Do you think icebergs have nothing else to do but turn summersaults?"

"They seldom turn turtle," said Angus. "Not half so often as people think. Now then all. Bear a hand. Let us get the raft as well as we can before the flood makes. We have a very little distance to float across. If it was not so cold we might swim."

The whole party, except Bob, then set to work, and in a very short time a rough raft was fashioned. The oar would serve very well to propel it, the mass of the iceberg would attract it, and no difficulty was anticipated by our adventurers.

Andrews and Bob were first carried over by Angus, who navigated the raft fairly into the ice-creek in which Tom and his cousin had formerly landed. Then Angus returned for the others, who all came across at once, but the planks were partly under water with the weight.

"Rather ticklish," remarked Angus. "Now, haul up the raft. We may want this timber for barter. The Esquimaux are very glad of wood."

So the raft was hauled up, but only just in time. Up came the tide lashing, swirling, and tearing the ice. The great berg trembled. Then came a tremendous shock, then another, and finally a grand and beautiful sight was witnessed.

The arch which we have mentioned as overhanging the cliffs had, by the repeated tidal shocks and the sun's influence, become insecure. This tide settled its

fate. It tottered at the base, gave way, and with a fearful plunge and a roar which must have been heard two miles away, it fell in a mass of blue and white; some portions were dashed into fragments at the base of the cliff, but the larger section fell upon the end of the ice-island our adventurers had just quitted, and broke its crust. An immense cake disappeared, and then the rushing tide came on. In ten minutes the little island was dashed and crushed up amid the hummocks, or carried in pieces to the shore upon the crest of the resistless tidal wave which came sweeping into the creek.

In less than a quarter of an hour the whole aspect of the little cove had been changed. The snow shelter had disappeared, the den was nowhere, the ice had been packed up and carried away by Neptune's orders, and a scene of confusion reigned. The warning had come only just in time.

"Awful, isn't it?" whispered Cecil. "What would have become of us had we delayed our departure? Here we are comparatively safe."

"The fall of that arch did us good," said Andrews. "We've cut away so much top hamper, and she'll ride better now. She's off, sir," he cried.

"Anyone for the shore?" shouted Bob. "Ring-a-ding-dong. Anyone for the shore?"

"Don't check him, sir," whispered Andrews to the lieutenant. "Let him keep his spirits up. We may want them all."

Angus nodded. He had been on the point of rebuking Bob for his ill-timed levity, but the old sailor's remark made him pause. So he smiled, and the others laughed outright.

"Bob is certainly better," remarked Cecil. "The idea of a ride on an iceberg seems pleasant, Bob."

"Stunning!" replied the boy. "I feel as jolly as a sand-boy, though why sand-boys should be so much

jollier than other people I don't know. What is a sand-boy, Angus?"

"A term for 'sand-hopper,' perhaps," replied the lieutenant. "Do you remember the hoppers down at Instow of an evening? They were lively and jolly enough, so perhaps sand-boy is merely a term for that leaping animal on the sand."

"Look! We are going along now," exclaimed Cecil suddenly. "I don't like this at all; let us climb up. We shall at anyrate have a view from the top and be out of danger of falling masses."

They all struggled up, but on the whole found the ascent easier than they expected. Many large pieces of ice had fallen down since Tom and Bob had made the partial ascent, and all traces of the men whom they had heard were obliterated. At length the flattish rounded "knubbly" upper part was reached, and, greatly to Tom's surprise, several little pools of water were visible in the tiny ice-wells which studded the surface of the berg.

The view was extensive but misty. Some low-lying islands were visible both up and down the Straits, and Angus declared he could see some land lying low to the south-west. But the schooner *Annie*, even with the glass, was not perceptible.

"We are fairly off," said Cecil. "The tide is coming up with a vengeance again. The first was only a farce—a *lever de rideau*, here is the *pièce de résistance*."

"We are fortunate indeed," said Andrews. "Did you ever hear such a roaring? Listen!"

Thousands and thousands of tons of ice were at that moment being lifted up, and were heaving about, sliding down, churning and surging in the water, which jetted up many feet into the air. Great masses bumped and swirled about, and some hummocks came crashing against the iceberg; but the mountain did not

mind such puny antagonists, and proceeded up the Strait proudly floating, and lifting gently with the swell.

"Can you see the *Annie*, Angus?"

"No," he replied. "We shall be in a fix if we cannot sight her before the tide turns. Let us rig up a pole and make a signal. The oar will do."

Upon the highest point of the berg the oar was fixed, and a red kerchief which Andrews took from his neck was tied to the improvised flagstaff.

"If this berg is sound there is no danger," said Andrews. "But if she's rotting, as I am afraid she is, we shall run a fearful risk. We may go any time."

This cheerful remark naturally tended to put the whole party into high spirits! The chance of being carried over by the berg was becoming more and more certain, and unless rescue came the young adventurers had small hopes.

"Boys," said Angus, after a pause, "we must make up our minds to our danger. I have great hopes of that Esquimaux. He came probably from some of the islands in the Strait—the Middle Savage Island, I suspect. If so, he will on this tide find the *Annie*. On the ebb with the nor'-wester she will run down, if possible, to us. Now, we must cheer up, and when we are rescued, then, lads, we'll run south direct for Ungava Bay. I am sorry we did not wait in Belle Isle Strait, for we are certainly in a greater one now."

The lads looked grave; the iceberg was by no means steady, and great pieces continually fell away. Day declined. The moon rose, and the effect was grand in the extreme but of short duration. The sun again rose; the tide had turned. The berg would race down the current again to the Atlantic, and no hope remained.

Tired out, the lads had found as safe a nook as possible upon the great berg, which turned round and

round, sometimes lurching in a manner very painfully suggestive to Angus and the sailor who kept watch together.

"Will she last, Andrews?"

"I doubt it, sir, unless she drops some of the steeple yonder. That peak may pull her over."

"Can we detach it, think you?"

"It's a mountain, sir—a mountain in itself. We might try; have you any powder to spare?"

"Yes," replied Angus.

"Then we'll undermine it. It won't take long to dig into the thin part there. My bowie will do some service, and that spike you picked up will help. Come along, sir."

These two determined men advanced very cautiously along the rugged surface of the glacier, for such it may be termed. These tremendous bergs are detached from the ice-bound coast of Meta and other "terra incognita." The currents carry them out, and they are feared by the fishermen, because, independently of the chances of overturning, there is always a "tide" setting in against a large berg. Sometimes they burst and are exploded into thousands of fragments.

The upper portion, which the venturesome lieutenant and his companion were about to break off, was a kind of obelisk of shorter and rounder form than usual. The base was perched upon a "pediment," which supported it in a most marvellous way. Then a great mass uprose, and finally the obelisk stood up sparkling and beautiful, seamed by the most lovely blue, a lapis lazuli blue, and amethyst.

To the base of this splendid tower or obelisk the men climbed with difficulty. But a resting-place was found. Sailors were not likely to feel giddy even perched up as they were on the slippery surface while the berg was rolling and dipping in a manner which would have made some people ill. Andrews dug

away the ice and Angus assisted him. In about an hour a very considerable hole was excavated.

"We forgot one thing, remarked Angus. "We have no fuse to fire our mine."

"We will fire at it," replied Andrews. "The ignited wad will soon explode the mine, and I do not think we shall want much powder. I've seen a berg break after a shot; the concussion sent it over. But look here, sir, here's a pleasant welcome."

Scarcely had he spoken when the fog rose. One of those wonderfully sudden changes which the Strait is notorious for came down upon the water. A few moments before the sun had been shining, the air had been generally clear and warm. Suddenly from the northern coast down some gully came the puff of wind and enveloped the land and sea in a chilling mist. The wind increased and drove the berg along southwards and eastward.

This sudden reaction damped the ardour of the workers as effectually as it would have damped their powder had it been exposed. Then came a shift of wind, and under the blast the hardy sailors had to scramble down from their somewhat precarious position to the comparative safety of the main berg. The ice-mountain swayed and rolled, and Angus believed the last hour for him and his friends had come.

"Let us hurry back and find the boys," he cried. "There is no chance for us, Andrews. This fog will be our death-warrant."

Andrews said nothing. He retraced his steps cautiously, followed by Angus. In five minutes the party were all united again. The uneasy and half-frozen sleepers were awakened, the state of affairs explained.

Arthur, for a wonder, took a more cheerful view of the situation. "It was certainly wonderful," says Bob in his diary, "to see how old Arthur picked up his courage in emergencies." Yes, Bob, and others of the

party too were changing their views quite unconsciously.

"It is no doubt a very serious question," said Arthur slowly, "and we cannot deny that we are in a fix. But I suggest we fire minute-guns to let Captain Morris know we are here. Our flag cannot be seen, but our shots will be heard."

"Bravo, Arthur! We will fire in parties of three alternately. The three guns will surely be heard. Now, you, Tom, and Cecil shall begin. With blank cartridge load."

They had no cartridges, but the powder was put down and a wad rammed on the top of it until the ramrod sprang right up out of the barrel. (Readers must remember that our young people generally used the old style of arm because of the difficulty of obtaining cartridges, although they had a small supply on board the schooner.)

The lads were ready. "Fire!" cried Angus.

Three shots burst simultaneously forth. An echo came back from the great obelisk, and rolled away across the Straits.

After a minute had elapsed Angus again gave the word and another volley succeeded. Then in due course a third. After the fourth a sharp sound which was not the echo came to the ears of the party.

"A signal!" cried Angus. The *Annie* is near!"

"Too much like a rifle crack," replied Andrews.

"Fire again, boys," said Angus. "Load and fire. Now! Let us all shoot this time, and shout!"

A fifth volley from six guns and a roar from six pairs of lungs were succeeded by a louder sound. Then a fearful roar, a rasping, crashing, rushing avalanche of sound succeeded, a series of plunges followed, then silence—deep!

The berg remained almost unmoved, the plunging had ceased.

"The pinnacle has fallen," said Andrews. "The powder did it in a way we did not calculate on. Three cheers! the fog is lifting."

Three loud cheers were given and repeated; and when the sound had died away there came back through the rising mist a sharp flat slap, or concussion, which seemed to rise from the water on the south side.

"A gun, sure enough," shouted Cecil. "The *Annie* I'll bet. Huzza, huzza!"

CHAPTER XVI.

RESCUED FROM THE ICEBERG—A DISCUSSION—OFF
UNGAVA—ARRIVAL OF THE ESQUIMAUX OOMIACK.



UZZA, indeed! The treacherous fog lifted almost as suddenly as it had descended. Another shot, which was answered. Then a cheer came up from the sea, "*Annie's* ahoy!"

"*Annie* ahoy!" shouted Andrews through his hands, speaking-trumpet fashion. "All well!"

"Thank God!" came up in stentorian tones through the trumpet. "I'll stand by the berg!"

"Come round to leeward," shouted Angus, "and lower a boat."

"Ay, ay," replied the captain. "If I can. I'll send a boat anyway."

But the wind was rather drifting the *Annie* against the berg, and it was with some little difficulty that Captain Morris "claw'd off" the mass of ice. The fog continued to clear off, the sun came out, and then the adventurers perceived the trim schooner standing off to clear the berg, and run under its lee.

The waving of hats and the cheering must have astonished anyone within hearing and within view of the berg. The schooner was smartly handled and bore up, not coming very close to the iceberg, because had Captain Morris done so he would have been becalmed

and drifted on the berg. So he beat off and on while the boat was pulled rapidly to the little icy cove, by which the party were already awaiting their rescuers.

The water was several feet deep in this tiny harbour, and at the bottom could be seen the ice—for the berg seemed perfectly solid—and looking that peculiar "tawny green" which ice invariably assumes in such circumstances. The party glanced upwards at the magnificent mass, at the awfulness of which they shuddered.

"I do not think I was ever so glad to quit any place as I am to leave this old berg," said Tom. "It is grand, certainly, but more imposing at a distance."

"Which lends enchantment," added Bob. "We are all delighted to say 'farewell,' oh, berg!"

"Good-bye, iceberg," said they all. "Hurrah, here's George! Well steered, George! What cheer?"

"What cheer!" replied George. "Well, considering your *Crusoe* mode of proceeding, I think you all look pretty fit. Why, Bob, what's the matter?"

"Nearly died, George. We've had a dreadful time. Never mind now. Tom saved me."

"No joke that, my dear boy. Now for the schooner. Give way, men."

"Lucky you fired these shots," remarked George, as the boat, impelled by four sturdy rowers, dashed through the water. "We had almost despaired when the fog fell so suddenly, and the berg was out of sight. What a thundering row you made!"

"The ice pinnacle fell," said Angus. "Andrews and I picked it about a bit, and the firing settled the matter. Here we are. Well, it is worth being away to be welcomed back!"

Such a meeting as it was! The captain and crew came and shook hands, cheered and shook hands again. Comments were freely passed, and the faithful Andrews was specially rewarded. Then Angus addressed

the men, and said he thanked them and their brave captain, to whom he would speak privately. "But now," he continued, "I will only say to you that your pay shall be doubled for the time you were cruising for us; and we will have an extra allowance of grog at once to celebrate our return."

But Captain Morris would have no more speaking. He ordered all hands the grog, but insisted on Angus and the younger ones having some hot food, and turning in. This sensible advice was acted on. The meal which had been preparing was eaten, and full justice done to it after the daily bear-meat allowance. Then all the wanderers turned in.

"Head her for Ungava," was Angus' orders as he went to his crib. "We have had enough of experimenting with ice and Meta. We must begin our search in earnest. Ho for Labrador!"

"All right, sir," said the captain. "The wind will run us down, but we must mind the ice-drift. Ungava is an ugly place so early in the season. The tides rush in there awfully. I'd rather run back and work up the coast again."

"Too late," said Angus, as he turned in. "Here we are well to the westward. We can make Ungava first and deliberate after."

So saying he turned round, lay down, and in five minutes was fast asleep. The boys had all anticipated him, and their heavy breathing told how greatly they needed rest, and how thoroughly they were enjoying it.

Captain Morris turned away, muttering to George Hamilton confidentially:

"No, sir; not me! You don't catch me trying to put into Ungava Bay this time o' year. I'll venture to mutiny this time, and slip down the coast to Hebron or Nain. A few hundred miles more or less don't matter when pleasure is the only business."

So the captain gave orders accordingly. The boys and Angus still slept. To the eastward and southward the *Annie* flew steadily, aided by wind and current. The seventy-second degree was passed; and the great Bay of Ungava opened up to the southward before Angus awoke.

"Bless me, I must have slept hours," he exclaimed. "Hollo, captain, are we in Ungava Bay yet?"

"No, sir, and we will never be, I hope. It's down south of us. Ye can see Akpatok Island with the glass."

"But I wanted to make for Ungava."

"You can't enter the bay until the middle of August, and if you remain until September you can't get out! So I say, don't attempt it!"

"But there is a fort there, Fort Chimo. From the men in charge I can gain information. We must search for the Talisman, and one of the directions given is to land at Fort Chimo."

"Whoever gave any such directions didn't know what he was talkin' of. Rather old man, I take it!"

"Why?" asked Angus, much surprised. The boys, too, had been aroused, and were listening to the discussion.

"Why! because Fort Chimo was abandoned some years ago. There's no one there. You can't get what don't exist! No, sir, let us make for Nain, or even for Esquimaux Bay down east. What's your trouble?"

Angus promised to enlighten him when the boys had come on deck. After dinner the directions for the finding of the Talisman would be submitted to the captain, whose shrewd common sense Angus hoped to profit by.

The younger members of the expedition, who had quite recovered their normal elasticity after good food and a long rest, came on deck, and a discussion arose. After dinner Angus, according to arrangement, pro-

duced all the papers which he had brought with him. Then George Hamilton, the captain, and the others all sat down in the cabin to arrange definite plans.

"Captain Morris," began Angus, "you are already aware of the circumstances which have compelled us to come and search for what we have reason to believe will prove a hidden treasure. Our future, we understand from the will of the eccentric Captain Wood—Hudson's Bay agent—"

"Very eccentric!" interjected Morris.

"Our future," continued Angus, "will depend upon the success of our mission. My dearest hopes will then be fulfilled, our general happiness, I hope, secured."

"Hear, hear!" cried Cecil.

"And much that is valuable will be recovered. Now, Captain Morris, tell me your opinion. You say we must not put into Ungava Bay. The Talisman we seek is, I fancy, in the interior; but I must confess the landmarks are not described as clearly as one could wish. The latitude and longitude are given, 68°25' west, 53°22' north.

"Why, my goodness, that's not the bay or thereabouts," exclaimed the captain, "it's inland, miles!"

"Exactly so," replied Angus, "and therefore I said, Put into Ungava Bay as the nearest point."

Captain Morris rubbed his head doubtfully, and asked to see the papers. "This would bring us far below Fort Chimo," he said. "Now, to my certain knowledge, that fort was quitted in 1842, and this document is dated 1854. So you may depend the old gentleman was under a mistake. He fancied the station! Now, when was he up here?"

"We can only surmise from the papers. We know he was here in Labrador, fishing or exploring for some years with the Company."

"He must have made a mistake," said the captain.

"Scarcely likely," replied George. "Hand me the papers, Angus. Why, man," he exclaimed, "this is not the old gentleman's writing!"

"No," replied Angus blushing slightly; "it is a copy. The originals I left with Mr. Tracey. Annie copied it."

"Whew!" whistled Cecil.

"That accounts for the milk in the cocoa-nut," added Tom.

"It's rather mixed, Angus. The dear girl has apparently taken latitude for longitude, and see here—where is Esquimaux River?"

"Hamilton Inlet?" exclaimed Captain Morris. "Oh, that's eastward a good bit."

"What's the longitude?" inquired George practically, with a business-like air.

The captain consulted his chart, and said, "The entrance of the bay lies $54^{\circ} 23' N.$, $57^{\circ} 25' W.$ "

"Then Annie has muddled it somehow. Let me see," continued George, examining the papers. "In the first place I believe the $68^{\circ} 25'$ west, in her copy, is $58^{\circ} 25'$ west; the $53^{\circ} 22' N.$, which comes after, will tally near enough. Now let us compare notes. Angus, have you the originals or any original papers?"

"I have a memorandum of the will, and an original paper attached to it, in my box."

"Let us have them," said the captain. "A young lady cannot be supposed to know latitude and longitude always. Sixty-eight west in that latitude would bring us to the Lake Camupiscaw, which is about 350 miles from Ungava. There was once a post there; but the old gentleman, I am pretty sure, never ventured so far inland as that. No, Mr. Hamilton, your idea is the correct one. He landed at Hamilton Inlet. Here's Mr. Fowler. Well, sir?"

"This paper speaks of mission buildings and mountains. Are there any mountains near the bay you mention?" asked George.

"Certainly," replied the captain. "The Mealy Mountains run down close to the lake shore, near Rigolette. If we try on the map for the latitude and longitude of Rigolette, I should not be surprised if we found it something like what Mr. Hamilton suggests is the right spot."

"I'll look," cried Tom. "I'll get the map."

He returned with an atlas and made a little calculation, measuring as closely as possible.

"It is not far off."

"Well, Rigolette is a post of the Company. You may depend the young lady made a mistake; and Mr. Fowler, as in duty bound, thought her right. It is simple enough, sir."

"I suspect we have got to the root of the matter," said Angus, who was rather vexed. "We have had a wild-goose chase, though, all up the Strait, and run many serious risks. I am extremely sorry Annie made such a mistake in copying. It might have cost us dear."

Nobody said anything. The danger was now over, and so far as the expedition was concerned the experience gained was not unwelcome. Tom winked at Bob, and whispered after a pause:

"I'll tell Annie she nearly killed us both."

"Hush!" said Bob. "Angus is worried enough, and Annie will fret to death if you say anything in your letters at any time about this mistake."

"I was only joking, Bob. Annie would just worry. So we'll say nothing."

"Now," said Angus after a pause, "what shall we do? Shall we go south direct, or explore a little as we proceed. Here's July nearly out, remember."

"Oh, let us explore," cried Cecil. "Let us land and see—"

"Land and sea!" interrupted Bob. "Which?"

"Bob, you are getting bad again. I was in hopes the ice had frozen up your puns. Let us land and see

the people, the Esquimaux, their huts, and all about them. "Can't we land, captain?"

"We'll run down to Cape Chidleigh, and see what the ice is like," replied the captain. "But my advice is, go to Hopedale. We can look in at Nain and other places, and study the Huskies if you like. But you won't like them."

"As we *are* here," said Arthur, "I vote we see all we can. We are never likely to come again."

"No," said George, "I won't, you may be sure."

"What is Ungava Bay like, captain?" asked Angus. "Have you ever landed there?"

"No, never. I tried once, but the currents are awful. The tide sometimes rises seventy feet, so you may imagine the nice time you have if the wind is north-east. The current from Resolution rushes slap into the bay and keeps the ice in. The coast is rugged."

"Well, then, there is nothing to be gained by landing. We may as well run along the coast to Hebron or Nain," said Angus. "If we see anything very interesting we will land or explore the islands. Captain, we will leave it to you—you will put us on the track."

"I'll show you something, young gentlemen. You shall have a seal-hunt if you like. I will stand in a bit, and perhaps some of the Huskies will come up. They are a queer race."

The captain gave the necessary orders; and then Tom, Arthur, and Cecil questioned him concerning the Esquimaux.

"Why are they called Esquimaux, anyway?" inquired Tom. "What does it mean?"

"Eaters of raw meat," replied the captain. "'Ash-ki-mai' the Indians called them; and I may tell you, the Indians have frequent rows with the flesh-eaters."

"Then there *are* Indians in Labrador?" said Bob, who had been listening.

"Yes, mountaineer Indians and Nasquapets. The

former call the latter 'heathens;' but in some books I have read I see it means a person who stands upright. I can't decide. But Labrador is by no means such a bad place. The climate in summer is hot and pleasant; hunting, fishing, and sealing is always going on. You must dress accordingly and rough it; but worse things happen at sea."

"What are these, captain?" inquired Tom, indicating some dark objects in the water.

"Kyacks," replied the captain. "We shall have a few Ungava Esquimaux on board. Now you will see some fun; you will laugh when the ladies arrive, I'll bet!"

"These are not women—are they?" asked Cecil.

"Yes, that's a woman's boat. Queer critters, Esquimaux. They're dying out fast here. But if we can get ashore you *will* be surprised."

The large boat "manned" by women, as the captain said, rapidly approached. This kyack was much larger than the one that the lads had already seen, which only contained one man—the messenger. Tom inquired for him.

"I rewarded him," replied the captain. "He got some wood and a knife. He was well paid. Here come the ladies, young gentlemen."

The ladies were a considerable distance off then, and some difficulty would be experienced by them ere they could reach the schooner. The ice, they could see, was thick in the bay, and the snow still covered the inhospitable shore. Great bits of ice were continually breaking off, but the iron hand of winter had scarcely yet loosed its hold upon Ungava. Between the schooner and the island, on which some great beehives could be discerned alongside a few tents lay ice, then water, then ice again. The schooner lay some distance out, but a north-easter would have driven her up upon the floe in an hour.

The Esquimaux had perceived them, and had made

preparations for visiting the schooner. Men put off in kyacks, which they managed with wonderful dexterity; then quitting them the canoeists dragged them over the ice to the open water, and they skimmed over the waves like laths propelled by paddles. The manner in which the men navigated the kyacks was a source of wonder to the boys, who were all good oarsmen and could canoe, but not in the fashion of the Esquimaux. Dull and heavy as the Esquimaux may appear on land, he becomes a different being in his trusty kyack.

"I daresay we shall see some sport presently," said Captain Morris. "But we must keep a good look-out for a change. We should be in a tight place if the wind come out of the north. It's rather early in the season to be up here. The ice is thicker, too, and it's scarce spring up here in this spot."

"All the better," said Tom. "We can have a nice Arctic hunting expedition. We can catch seals on the ice yonder, and birds on the islands lower down."

"You'll have enough Arctic work in three days if a snow-storm catches us here. The Huskies have only just begun their 'toupies.'"

"What's a toothpic, captain?" asked Bob—"an Esquimaux toothpic, I mean."

"Toupie!" replied the captain—"a hut or tent, the Esquimaux dwelling."

"I thought 'igloo' was the name of the house," said Cecil.

"Yes, the snow-house. See them beehives—well, those are 'igloos.' The other erection near the cliff is a 'toupie'—the summer-house."

"Then those beehives are houses?" said Bob. "Are they made of snow, Angus?"

"They are," replied Angus—"blocks of ice and snow. They melt away generally in the summer. But the Esquimaux can build again in autumn, and have a new house every year—no rent, no taxes."

"I should like very much to go ashore and see the inside before the snow melts. The Huskies live there, I suppose?" said Arthur.

"Yes, each family in a hut or igloo. It is not the pleasantest place to live in, I can assure you," said Captain Morris.

"After the people have gone we will try and reach the shore," he continued. "But we must be careful. If the ice break up suddenly, or, what would be worse, re-form, as it does sometimes in late seasons, we shall have a bad time—the *Annie* may be 'nipped.'"

"Not much fear," remarked Angus. "The year is too far advanced. The winter certainly has anchored here, though. It's very late for so much ice—isn't it?"

"Yes, sir; so we may have more to do than we bargained for. The ice never clears out of this till near the end of August—more than a month ahead yet. It's pretty chilly, I can tell you."

"Here comes the oomiak. Now we shall see the Esquimaux ladies. How well they paddle!—I say, they do make the canoe fly along!" cried Tom.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cheered the boys.

A response was given by a "hey-heying" which came across the water, and then with redoubled ardour the great kyack was driven over the sea, walking the waters literally like a thing of life, and with a speed which no one who has not seen the Esquimaux in his boat can quite appreciate.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HUSKIES COME ON BOARD—THEIR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS—SOME KYACK RACES AND SPORTS—THE CAPTAIN'S STORY OF THE BEAR.



HE oomiak, or woman's boat, was now close alongside the schooner. All the lads pressed to the bulwarks to see the ladies paddle their own canoe—and very well they did it. The men in single kyacks, or "kayacks," kept aloof, thinking that the gentler sex might as well pave the way to a barter.

"They are quite tame, I suppose," said Cecil to the captain.

"Well—yes," he replied slowly. "They won't hurt us if we don't hurt them. They may try to steal a little, specially iron. Hear that, Mr. Bob?"

"Yes," replied Bob. "You mean some fearful joke, I daresay. But my joking days have all passed, Captain Morris. Puns are now relinquished."

"Oh, hope not—only bad ones like mine! Here come our new friends. They scarcely look fit for a ball-room, now—do they?"

The Esquimaux ladies keep their boat to themselves, as a rule; occasionally a man steers it, but he is an old man. The oomiak is covered with seal-skin, like the kyack; it is about thirty feet in length and about six feet wide. The women handle their large canoes with

much dexterity, and in the present instance they excited the admiration of the sailors as well as the less experienced young travellers.

A considerable hubbub arose when the question of boarding was broached. No young woman liked to venture alone. But the initial difficulty overcome, one lady was quickly followed by another, and in time six Esquimaux *belles* were standing gazing round in surprise at the young sailors. Many kyacks came alongside also, and the crew were cautioned by Captain Morris not to permit any of the men to penetrate into the cabin.

The inveterate chymo or kimo was pronounced, and various articles were soon exchanged for native decorations. The wood which the lads had recovered was specially in demand, the term for it being "karrack."

"Karrack! karrack!" cried the men like so many landrails; and within a short time the spare spars and some loose logs were profitably disposed of for ivory and seal-skins. There is very little wood in the country, and so the natives value it to a degree which can scarcely be appreciated by us.

When the ladies first came on deck it was as much as the boys could do to restrain their laughter. Bob and Tom spluttered like porpoises, and finally turned away to the companion-hatch, where they fairly roared. The walking of the *belles* was the most ludicrous sight they had ever seen, and the costume so fully displayed was unique.

Picture a stoutish, shortish, dusky woman attired in seal-skin boots, and trousers which reach to the hips, where they are joined by a "body garment" of seal-skin. But the peculiar over-dress is the article which astonishes the visitor most. It bears a curious resemblance to the "claw-hammer" coat—the dress-coat of the gentleman of our day. A long tail hangs down to the calf of the leg, like a kangaroo's appendage, about

four inches wide, and a smaller flap in front—the “dress-coat” being hollowed away at the sides; a hood in which a baby is frequently carried completes the charming picture.

When the Esquimaux lady walks she “limps” along. There is no grace in her gait; and each time she plumps down a foot, with a “list” to port or starboard, as the case may be, the tail we have mentioned slaps against her legs; for she requires no dress-improver to extend the ornament which dangles from the waist. The prospect was not improved by the slight rolling of the schooner, and altogether our young people were greatly entertained.

The first word the spokeswoman uttered was Pilletay!—a demand for a present. Scarcely had the word been uttered than the others in chorus called out “Pilletay! Pilletay!” until the captain was half mad. He made them each a present, and the lads bestowed a few trifles upon the prettiest girls, which the dusky, but not sweet, lasses, accepted with much wide-mouth smiling. Conversation was decidedly limited, but the captain made an agreement to go ashore and visit their village.

The Esquimaux would not go, they wished to remain on board. This the captain would not permit. He considered that the interview had lasted quite long enough, for the natives are not quite the pleasantest companions, nor is their odour that of eau de Cologne. So he gave orders to wear ship and run out into the Straits. Then there was “racing and chasing o’er Canobie Lea.” The men who had ventured up at once bolted, regaining their kyacks with great agility. The women—or girls—bumped heavily across the deck, and chattered in a discordant manner. The big boat was pulled alongside, and then, with many bows, smiles, and much laughter, the lady visitors left the schooner, though they were recalled, says Tom, for many a day after.

"Poor creatures!" exclaimed Cecil. "They are indeed savages. I think all the romance I had entertained concerning Esquimaux, the sleighs, dogs, sports, and fishing, will never return. They are greasy, evil-smelling savages."

"Scarcely savages," remarked Angus. "They have a language, which is intelligible. They are being converted by degrees. They are honest to each other, not cruel, but will plunder strangers."

"Aren't they cruel?" exclaimed the captain. "Did you see that old man in the stern of the *comiak*?"

"Yes," said Arthur. "He is a perfect fright—a skeleton. He won't last long, poor fellow!"

"He will not," replied the captain. "They will kill him in a couple of days."

"Murder him!—stab him!" exclaimed Arthur.

"No; merely shut him up in a snow-house yonder. There's plenty of snow left yet, and they'll leave him to die there. It's only a custom."

"It can't be. Do you really mean it, captain?"

"I understood the women to say so. He knows his fate, and doesn't seem to mind."

"Cannot we prevent it?" asked Angus.

"How? We cannot interfere. The natives would attack us. These fellows are not Christians. They are the 'savage untutored' up here. Below at Hope-dale or Invucktoke you might have a chance."

"Let us inquire," said Arthur. "We will go ashore and find out. What do these men want?"

"They have come to show us what they can do with their kyacks. We will make them race for us. It is splendid fun. Isn't it, Mr. Fowler?"

"Yes," replied Angus. "I have seen them off Greenland. We will offer them prizes—a chunk of wood, or a knife, or tobacco."

The men came nearer, and the captain, assisted by Arthur and Angus, had little difficulty in persuading

the Esquimaux men to compete. A piece of tobacco was the prize for the first race.

Each man took his station, and at the firing of a pistol in orthodox fashion the blades of the paddles flashed into the water. The paddles revolved with tremendous rapidity. The light craft flew over the small waves. The pace was tremendous, and yet to the strangers the exertion appeared very little. The body was kept beautifully balanced, the wrists whirled the blades around in perfect circles, and the kyacks simply flew through, or rather over, the water, skimming from wave to wave like sea-birds.

"Beautiful!" cried Tom. "My man will win. Here he comes, an easy first."

"Not he!" cried Arthur. "My fellow has shot out now. See! he is leading. Ha! ha!"

"There is a little bit of ice in the way of my man," remarked Bob. "He will lose the race. He must go round the ice. What a stupid to take that course! I've lost my little bet—a new knife. Wretch!" he exclaimed to the unconscious canoeist.

"Never you mind, sir," whispered Captain Morris. "Your man will win."

"Win!" whispered Bob. "Why, he's got to go round that barrier of ice. It's quite two feet wide, and as deep as the mainmast. He'll lose twenty yards."

"You'll see," said the captain. "I'll back the little man," he cried, "Mr. Bob wins."

"Done! done!" cried both Arthur and Tom. "We'll take your bet in seal-skin gloves—a pair each. Hurrah for our fellows!"

"Wait a minute!" said the captain.

The smallest rower was still holding his own, but, as Bob had feared, the small jutting piece of ice would compel him to fall back by turning him out of his straight course. The other men were paddling direct

for the schooner, which was again lying to. But the little man still paddled towards the ice frantically.

"He'll lose, you'll see. There, he *must* turn," cried Tom. "Bob, I'm sorry for you. He had the short side before, and but for the ice would have a good chance."

As Tom was speaking the "little man" came on, and everyone expected to see him dashed to pieces on the ice-reef. But to Bob's delight, and to the chagrin of Arthur and Tom, the kyack was driven lightly *over* the breakwater, and in a moment slid into the water on the other side."

"Splendid!" shouted Bob. "My man wins."

"Told you so," remarked the captain. "I guessed his game. Here he comes in now, hand over hand. He gained five yards by that jump."

The kyacks came skimming along—Bob's man foremost—and in three minutes more he won the very exciting race by half a length.

"I'll trouble you for the gloves the first opportunity," said Bob. "Now I'll reward my jockey."

"We will make them do something better," said the captain. "These fellows can work their kyacks in a way that will astonish you."

The men came on board. The winner was rewarded, and each of the others got a small present.

Then the captain, with much pantomime, made a request, holding up two knives and a fine log of wood, which was in itself a prize. The men smiled and consulted, then dashed into the kyacks again, and circled round.

"What is the next performance?" inquired Tom.

"You will see," said the captain. "I guess they will about astonish you this time."

"They have astonished me already," replied Tom. "They are certainly wonderful canoeists."

While the boys and the members of the crew were

speculating concerning the next feat, the Esquimaux were getting ready. One man, seeing a prospect of tobacco, placed his kyack directly in front, and at right angles to the course of another kyack. The latter, swiftly impelled by its occupant, shot across and over the stationary canoe without disturbing either occupant. The one who had been jumped over merely sat still, holding his paddle against the side of his kyack to steady it.

"Well done!" exclaimed Arthur. "They are certainly clever fellows. But look here, Bob!"

Bob and the others ran across the deck in time to see an Esquimaux knock his kyack over as he sat in it, and the light bark at once turned bottom upwards, he remaining in it quite unconcerned. When he had turned completely over he was seen to give another stroke of the facile paddle, and then he came up again, as Bob expressed the situation, "as right as ninepence." Before the European spectators had recovered from their astonishment the man proceeded to revolve rapidly, and nothing could be perceived distinctly except the whirling paddle, which flashed through the air for a second as the kyack again went over.

"I wonder the boat does not fill up and sink," remarked Cecil.

"It can't," replied the captain. "He has taken care to secure the aperture round his waist with a water-proof apron. See! the boat is quite water-tight, and cannot harm. It is wonderfully buoyant also."

The performers were rewarded, and many came for presents who had done nothing for them. Still each one eventually received some little gift, and after a while, with some reluctance, they departed.

"There they go at last!" said Angus. "Now, let us have some dinner or supper, call it what you please. The evening is fine, but the cold is still rather trying to me, captain."

"Ah, you've had it colder than this, sir, I'm pretty sure. Why, this is nothin' at all."

"It's below freezing, I think," said Tom.

"No, sir; only the wind makes the difference. Why, you can bear forty degrees below zero—aye, sixty degrees in calm weather. When in a wind, twelve and thirteen below is enough to bite your nose off."

"Really!" remarked Cecil. "The wind then is not a desirable assistance."

"Not in Polar Regions," replied the captain. "No, young gentlemen; what with bears and snow-storms and the chances of shipwreck, you don't have an out-of-the-way cheerful time up by Spitzbergen, say. And the snow-storms!"

"Regular blinding ones, I suppose," said Tom, who was anxious to draw the captain out that evening.

"Blinding!" replied the captain as he went on with his supper. "Just a little. The clouds come down on you apparently and break up into columns and waves of snow which whirl and dash against each other. The flakes are so thick you can't tell where you are. You are buffeted, blinded, helpless. Your eyelashes are frozen, your beard and moustache are one mass of ice which joins your throat muffler, and you have an ice collar as hard as iron. If you attempt to pull a muffler over your mouth you will be frozen to it, and your lips pulled off almost. Awful!"

"Then you've been through it, captain?"

"Guess I have—a little. I was up there with Doctor Kane, and a fine time we had too. Ye can read all about it in a book."

"I wish you would tell us something about it," said Bob. "I won't make any puns, captain."

"No, my lad; I think your late experience has cured you of your bad habit. Not as I think a joke a bad thing in its place—in its place, mind you. But when a young fellow is always punning on any subject then

my opinion is he ought to be stoppered, and kept tied down till wanted—drawn out occasionally as a flavour—you understand?"

"Quite," replied Bob. "All serene, captain. There is no ill-feeling. Tell us all about Kane—Dr. Kane, I mean."

"Tell ye *all* about Kane! Why, I should have to go on all night, and then not finish. Kane was a MAN, I tell you!"

"I suppose so," remarked Tom. "But what did he do? Did he find the North Pole or the North-West Passage? Did he find anybody particular? Tell us, captain; don't be bashful."

"Bashful! Me? No, sir. No one can call me guilty of *that* vice, at anyrate. Bashfulness, when a man has anything to be proud of—honestly proud of—amounts to a sin in my eyes. Now, I'm proud of having sailed with Kane. I'll tell ye one story of a bear."

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY OF THE WHITE BEAR.

"It was in June, '54, if I remember right, just the time when bears are most plentiful up north where we were. We had gone out in search of Franklin—the Grinnell Expedition, you know—and had a heavy time. But on this occasion some of us were separated from the main body, and had encamped on the ice. We had noticed the bears' tracks, and concluded they would pay us a visit. So we made all needful preparations, but no bears appeared.

"We had pitched our tents, and were pretty comfortable considering. We were all asleep—at least, I know I was—when one of the party—M'Garry I think it was—heard or felt a kind of scratching in the snow near his head. This wasn't a very pleasant sensation, you may believe, under the circumstances. So

he woke up and looked around. He could perceive some huge animal walking about, and, knowing it must be a bear, he yelled out to us.

"We were awake in a second. Such a yell as he let off would have stirred up the Seven Sleepers themselves; but it had no effect on that bear. Not one bit. Bruin calmly continued his walk round, investigating the place, and thinking what to lay hold of.

"Well, up we jumped and felt for our guns; but we suddenly remembered that they had been left on the sledge outside, and we had nothing but our hands to defend ourselves with—and hands ar'n't much good when bears is around.

"So long as the bear kept outside we were cool, but when he turned and shoved his nose inside I can tell you we felt just skeered enough, for we were entirely defenceless. Lucifer matches wouldn't count much, and newspapers is almost useless when you come to tackle a Polar bear, who doesn't care for politics, and won't stop to argue on the chances for president. But we had only matches and paper, which we lighted, I tell you, pretty quick. But, bless you, the bear took no more notice of the lucifers than if he was a match-maker himself, and the lighted newspaper pleased him rather. Perhaps he knew the editor, and was glad to see the paper burned. Anyhow, he just looked in at us and said nothing, never even passed us the time. Uncivil, I call it, but Polar bears, as you will understand, has no much opportunity to learn manners up north.

"Fortunately, a bit of a seal lay near, and he smelt it. Then he turned it about, stood by the tent door, and began to eat his supper, or, rather, I should say, our breakfast. Never saw such a cool proceeding in all my born days—never!"

"Well, when he was fully occupied, paying no more attention to us than if we were tramps and he a bar-

tender, one of us thought of a device—Tom Hickey it was who did it. He cut a hole in the tent behind and crawled out gently. Coming across a boat-hook he came and gave the bear a rap on the nose which made him stop to use his pocket-handkerchief and see whether he was hurt. He wiped his eyes and stepped back beyond the sledge, when Tom, like a flash, rushed up and seized a rifle or two, and came back like a boomerang to where he started from, before the bear had finished wiping his eyes and nose.

"Then Mr. Bonsall took the rifle, and just as he saw mischief brewin' and the bear comin', he let fly, and sent a ball through the beast. But the worst was to come. We had hidden some stores near by in what we call a *cache*—a hiding-place in the snow. Well, if you'll believe me, the rocks which we had piled up were all torn away. The pemmican was all eaten up; at least, all not in iron cases, and these had been rolled about in a football game.

"The bears *had* been enjoying themselves, I can tell you. Tin things were rolled up into balls; they had swallowed all the ground coffee, and put the canvas bags on top of it to keep it quiet, like wadding on powder. They had annexed the stars and stripes—the little flag we had with us—and gnawed the staff. The bread-barrels had been rolled about like skittle balls. In fact, they had had a high old time.

"One bear could not have done all this by himself. So we went out and searched the place as the day came on. One rifle was missing, and we could not understand what had become of it. But a curious drag mark in the snow excited our attention, and we noticed bear-tracks. Off we hurried, and after a chase across the snow we caught sight of the bear carrying the rifle in her mouth as a kind of defiance. She had it mid-way in her jaws, and evidently fancied she had a prize. When she saw us she stopped, turned face

about, and I declare I half expected to see her stand up and fire the rifle.

"She didn't, however. She remained quite quiet for a minute, then took up the rifle, which she had laid down, and scuttled away. We were too quick for her, and in about half an hour we had her too, rifle and all. What on earth she wanted with the rifle I can't tell you—perhaps she thought there was something in the barrel. There's the tale, gentlemen, and you're very welcome to it." . . .

When the captain had finished his narrative, which he did with a testimony to Dr. Kane, who would have appreciated the compliment had he heard it, the boys rose laughing and proceeded on deck. Night, or what was called night, had fallen. The silence was quite oppressive, except when the thundering crash of the bergs or ice-blocks told of the everlasting conflict which the liquid water was waging with the solid.

"Let's go to bed," suggested Arthur, "and tomorrow we will explore those islands yonder. There must be many things to see, and we will have a regular holiday spree."

The question was put, and carried *nem. con.* The young explorers went below again. The watch was set, and in half an hour the *Annie* was resting peacefully on the still water and the only sound audible in the cabin was the heavy breathing of the sleepers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A LITTLE EXPEDITION: TOM AND THE DRIVER—THE
WALRUS AND THE BEAR—A RUN FOR BEAR LIFE.



ANGUS awoke early, at least after he had had but three hours' sleep. It is so difficult, he remarked, to go to sleep in daylight long at one time; but after a while he as well as the others got more accustomed to the long days, and afterwards to almost sunny nights. But the midnight sun had not appeared.

When the others had roused up they found Angus and the captain cleaning guns and making all ready for a fowling expedition. Poor "Wash" would have been of great service, but he was no more. The Esquimaux dogs were not to be had, and besides they preferred bear-hunting to such tame sport as the young people had in view.

"We will have a regular holiday," said Angus. "George, you will come of course. Captain, will you join us?"

"No," replied the captain, "I will remain with my ship. Tell you the truth, Mr. Fowler, I don't like this place. A nor'-east squall may run us ashore or make me haul off to escape it. Then you will have to remain till I come back. So don't go too far away, or look out for squalls."

"And I will remain with the captain," said Cecil. "My eyes feel dim, a little snow-blind."

"They are all right," remarked Arthur. "Come along, Tom. Bob, George, are you ready? We will have a fine home picnic. The weather is almost warm to-day."

"Well done, Arthur, you are really beginning to take a bright view of things. This little expedition has certainly already done wonders. It has nearly cured Bob's punning fever and removed your depression, Arthur."

"Yes, George, I think all this great fun, and even a little danger would not hurt us."

"Ah, don't you wish for danger," replied the captain, nodding his head with much sagacity. "Danger is always present up here; why, ice and water will give you enough danger any day, let alone bears, seals, Esquimaux, the wind and snow-storm. Danger! Ah!"

"Is there any fear?" inquired George of the captain quietly aside. "If so they had better remain on board the schooner."

"There's always danger in dangerous places," said the captain oracularly. "This is a dangerous place; so I say be cautious, and if you return and find me gone off, wait ashore till I return."

"But surely if you think—"

"I can't say. The sky is clear, the wind is cold certainly, there are few clouds yet; but from over yonder the squall may sweep up the Straits, and before you could regain the schooner I might have to cut and run. No, sir, go by all means; hunt among the islands, and if the worst come you will find shelter enough with the Huskies."

"Very well," replied George. "Angus, are you quite prepared to live *en Esquimaux*?"

"Quite," replied the lieutenant; "I have had some experience in that line already."

"What fun!" exclaimed the younger lads. "Let us live in an igloo. Now, come along, we have plenty of grub; the islands are swarming with birds, and the ice is dotted with sea-horses. We will have a good time, like Captain Morris' bears! Good-bye, Cecil. Sorry you can't come."

These observations were made by various members of the party, and in a short time they all started in high spirits in the boat, which Captain Morris had furnished with food, and all needful hunting and fishing appliances: two rifles with ammunition, four fowling-pieces, harpoons, lines, spears, and some beads and trinkets to pacify any unfriendly Esquimaux who might be inclined to find fault with the intruders.

Winter had not yet departed. The ice although broken up in places remained thick and in large floes, upon which seals basked, or from which they flopped as the boat approached. The sea-horses or walruses attracted much attention, and the lads were excessively anxious to kill some.

"Wait until we return; we cannot load the boat with such a weight now," said Angus who was steering. "Steady, now! In bow, rowed all!"

The wind was blowing up the Straits, and so was ahead of the boat as it wound in the channel in the ice, and was steered north-east towards an island where the eider ducks had established a Republic in the United State, as Bob declared, for they were all mated. In and out the channel wound: sometimes a puff of wind would come suddenly, and then the sail which had been hoisted would bend the boat almost over, and the salt spray would leap up and dash over them. Overhead ran gray clouds, and still snowy seams among the darker bits or little islets of clouds in the bluer parts looked like real islands and hummocks up aloft. On the open water swam many a bird, and

Tom had already loaded his gun to pepper a swimmer.

"Ease off a bit, Angus, let me have a good aim at him; it's a guillemot I think."

The particular bird which had attracted Tom's attention was not much larger than a pigeon, and perhaps more slender and graceful. It was black—a beautiful shiny black, save where a white patch had been inserted in the wings. As the boat approached under a reefed sail, skimming over the rippling water, now the black bright eyes of the guillemot became visible, darting sharp glances hither and thither, and even glittering in the light.

"Mind, Tom, he will dive if you don't look sharp," said George.

"Dive!" echoed Tom. "I'll have him before he can say Jack Robinson. He won't have time to dive!"

Angus smiled and steered a little off the wind so as to allow Tom a good shot to windward.

The beautiful glossy guillemot took no notice at all. He kept swimming gently along. He made no attempt to fly, but merely paddled along as tamely as possible.

"The fact is," remarked Bob, "he is not aware of firearms. He knows quite well we can't hit him with spears or arrows. But he has to learn what powder will do."

"How far are we now?" said Tom.

"About thirty yards," said Angus. "I will lower the sail, she will run within easy range."

The sail came down gently, so as not to alarm the guillemot, which continued to look about it in a calm and self-possessed manner, backwards and to each side, with a quick jerk of the head, which was very defying. The boat crept up foot by foot.

"I am sure we are near enough now," said Arthur. "We are barely twenty yards away."

"Let her run," said Tom. "I'll fire at fifteen yards, and if the guillemot can get away then I'm a Dutchman!"

No one spoke—the boat crept up—the bird kept paddling all unconscious apparently of the deadly gun which was levelled at it. Tom was steady, so was the boat. Fifteen yards—twelve yards—the guillemot was still quite happy, quite unprepared for its fate—ten yards—

Bang!

The piece flashed ruddily against the distant snow-white carpet. The shot dashed down all around the ripples in the water, where the guillemot had been. A splendid shot certainly. Tom had aimed well.

"Too near," said Arthur; "you have blown the poor thing to pieces."

"Not he," replied George, "I saw the animal dive as Tom pulled the trigger. He's beaten you, Tom; and you are a Dutchman by your own confession."

"Sold!" exclaimed Tom. "Did you ever see an innocent bird so smart as that? Why, he must have kept me after him on purpose. But wait till he comes up again!"

"No, we will not," said Angus. "Up sail, Bob! We shall find another one later, I daresay. We will go for some eider now."

"Eider ducks and eider down. Shall we find any down, Angus?"

"You can, if you choose to go to the nests on the islands. But if we only could find a king eider!"

"Are they so valuable?"

"Rather scarce here, so far south. The king eider likes the coldest places. Indeed his feathers are so thickly arranged that he must live in a cold climate."

"Surely this place is cold enough for a great-coat and eider-down vest too," said Arthur.

"Oh, this is nothing for the king duck. He thinks

this hot. When you find the mercury freezing in the thermometer, then your king is pleasantly warm. He would feel quite 'done' down here!"

"Roasted, no doubt," suggested Arthur.

"Precisely. No; I am afraid we must not expect the monarch of the Eider Islands here. We shall find plenty of the other species, and their enemies, the gulls, too."

"Do the gulls kill the eiders?" asked Bob.

"Yes, the little chicks. This 'saddle-back' gull will rob the nests of eggs and chickens and depopulate a whole colony," replied Angus.

"Why are they called saddle-back?" asked George.

"Because they have a black patch across the back which has something the appearance of a saddle. There will be plenty hereabouts. There, see!—look at the black mark. You need not fire—you will never hit one."

"Can't I?" said Arthur.

He raised his gun, but the gull, which was a moment before swooping gracefully around within shot, swerved off, and in a second had greatly increased its distance, while, at the same time, it and a numerous and sympathetic circle of relatives or friends kept up a screaming which was sufficient to exasperate any one.

"You beasts!" exclaimed Arthur, with slightly illogical temper and description. "You beasts!"

"Why beasts?" inquired George. "They are very wary—that's all. They would be donkeys to come and get killed, like Mrs. Bond's ducks."

A sudden exclamation from Bob at this juncture aroused the party from the contemplation of the gulls.

"Look at the walrus!" he cried. "There!"

The others followed the direction he indicated, and upon a hummock of ice perceived an enormous sea-horse or morse or walrus, as it may please you, my readers, to call it. It is certainly a most repulsive-

looking animal is your walrus; an elderly male specimen of the family being considered as ugly a customer as one may reasonably expect to meet in the cold regions. But for all its fierce looks and terrible tusky appearance, in spite of its ugly face and the projecting teeth, the walrus is, unless attacked, quite a peaceable, war-hating animal, and merely uses his big teeth as a rule in the perfectly legitimate work of disinterring shell-fish or other food, or in climbing the rocks.

The walrus is certainly a most valuable animal to the Esquimaux. Without such a source of food and clothing these tribes would indeed fare badly. We are apt to value our oxen; the Arab values his camel, both of which animals are extremely useful; and what the ox is to the Englishman the walrus is to the Esquimaux. From the sea-horse the Esquimaux, or Innuits, to call them by their proper name, obtain food and light. The flesh feeds the tribe, the oil illuminates the dwelling, and keeps it warm too. From the skin the kyack is gracefully fashioned; the sinews make nets—bird nets; the intestines make clothing which defies water; the flippers, constant to their purpose, serve the Esquimaux to shoe himself. Beyond this we need only mention that the tusks make a variety of articles, and form a medium of exchange in the form of valuable ivory.

When the walrus fails there is famine and desolation amid the tribes. But unless the weather be exceptionally bad the walrus, like Richelieu, knows no such word as "fail." It is the chief object of the Esquimaux alive, and cheers him to a paradise of unlimited sea-horses after death, and, moreover, a paradise in which the chase and capture of the walrus will be easy and unattended by any privations. Eating walrus is the Esquimaux idea of happiness. "Without the walrus there will be no heaven," says the Inuit; and we can understand his ideas of future bliss, when we consider

what a useful animal the morse is to him in the present life.

The cradle of the walrus is the cold ice—a floating nursery whereon the small sea-horse is brought up by its parent, and with her sails southward on the ice. It feeds on what it can obtain, not actually animal food nor fish, but upon shell-fish and sea grass, until it attains a great size and produces quantities of "blubber" in the shoulders, which, with the head, assume enormous proportions at times. The teeth, the canine teeth particularly, develop, the latter growing to immense lengths—two to three feet sometimes. Besides these teeth the adult walrus produces a bristly moustache. His eyes are small and said to be of little use, at any-rate out of the water. In the water we can't tell what use they may be, but every hunter knows that the walrus will scent him from windward many yards away, while from the opposite direction the animal will take no notice of an enemy till he is quite close.

The progression of the walrus is slow and very ungainly. It shuffles along and uses its big teeth like crutches, while it emits a grunting sound, sometimes a kind of "lowing" noise. The manner in which they lie and keep such a regular watch was subsequently observed by the lads, and we will condense Tom's remarks on the subject.

"The walrus," says our young friend, "wriggles up from the sea and goes to sleep slap on the ice." ("Slap" is a good word, Tom.) Then, according to the same learned authority, the walrus is followed by another one which also goes "asleep slap," and then another. As the constantly increasing numbers of the herd emerge one by one from the sea, each individual lies down somehow, either partly on or quite close to his neighbour. Others come and squeeze in, and at length hundreds of walruses are all packed on the ice like herrings, as close as they will fit, and closer. They are

nearly all asleep, but curiously enough some half-dozen or so are always awake. These watchers do not take much trouble to sit up. They merely glance round and flop down to sleep again, but in so doing they each arouse a few neighbours as is inevitable. The neighbours thus aroused sniff and look around, in turn awaking some others. So thus the whole herd in turn keeps a short watch, and some are always awake and ready to grunt out "danger!"

When sleeping in the water the walrus keeps a small portion of the head above water, and will, if alarmed, dive or swim away. Walruses are very timid, and never fight under any hitherto observable circumstances. They blow up little columns of vapour as the whale does, but they are generally timid and difficult to approach if they are to leeward of you. . . .

The particular walrus which has given rise to the foregoing description remained quite passive upon the sloping ice side of the islet.

"Can't we bag that fellow?" suggested Arthur.

"Shall we, Angus?" said George.

"If you like," replied Angus. "We can sell him to the Esquimaux or keep his ivory."

The boat rapidly neared the sloping side of the ice-bound island, and the young explorers had made ready their harpoons, when their attention was directed to a moving body amongst the rocks above the slope.

"Somebody is going to rob us of our walrus," said Tom. "Blow, wind, and fill the sail; let us get there first."

But the wind did not take any particular notice of Tom though he whistled for it—a form of invitation which the wind has always in our own personal experience attended to—for who can whistle without wind? Nevertheless the breeze did not increase, the moving object approached the walrus on the shore, and the boat approached the walrus by the sea-route.

The "somebody" apostrophized by Tom now became visible more distinctly. The individual was arrayed in white garments and seemed to have a bulky, ponderous form.

"What a fine Esquimaux!" said Bob.

"What a fine bear!" said Angus.

"Bear, Angus! Is that another white bear? He is a splendid fellow. Let us shoot him."

"More easily said than done," remarked George. "We shall have plenty to do to kill him, I suspect. He is a monster."

"Is he going to attack the walrus?" asked Tom.

"Looks like it," said Arthur. "I wonder whether the old walrus will see him in time."

"Go and wake him up, Bob. He's asleep," said George smiling.

"The bear will arouse him first. Let us see the fun," replied Bob.

Mr. Bruin had not perceived the boat, or if he had, it made no impression upon him, for he continued his course cautiously towards the fat walrus, which was quite unconscious of the approach of the polar guardian. The bear came crouching along as flat as he could make himself. He had evidently singled out this particular walrus, for there were numerous others lying at some distance. But the bear was a judge of walrus meat, and knew how to go shopping.

Nearer and nearer Bruin came crawling along. When he was near enough he rose and raced in the peculiar heavy manner of the plantigrades, lumbering along towards the walrus. Before the latter had recovered his senses he ran a great risk of losing them entirely, for the bear hit the unfortunate walrus over the head with his paws as hard as he could without the least remorse. The sea-horse never attempted to retaliate. His head being pretty thick and his senses rather muddled, he only dimly perceived that there was some-

body knocking and he aroused himself. The bear continued to practise the postman's summons on the morsey cranium without effect at first. But when the animal perceived that Bruin was really knocking at his door, he turned off and made for the sea again.

This manoeuvre Bruin essayed to interrupt, but unsuccessfully. The slippery slope favoured the walrus, and he slid down to the water. But Bruin was determined. He made a spring at the unfortunate morse and alighted on its back, where he remained fixed, endeavouring to arrest the prey. But the walrus was too heavy. He fell into the sea, and then the bear was obliged to jump off to save himself and Mr. Morse got away.¹

The boys cheered the walrus, and then they all made preparations to kill the bear.

"A nice little fight," said Bob. "We may write down the anecdote and publish it under the title of 'The Mill on the Floes!'"

"Bob!" said Arthur sternly, with meaning.

"Arthur!" said Bob smiling, also with meaning.

"Shut up! Don't be ridiculous."

"Sha'n't," replied Bob, laughing. "There's no harm in saying that. Is there, Angus?"

"No," replied Angus. "We'll forgive you this once."

Then Bob comforted himself by making a very ugly face at Arthur, and subsided into silence.

The bear and the walrus encounter was not yet over. The bear retired to the cliff and evidently waited. Then the walrus popped up his head, and seeing nothing to alarm him, climbed up on the rocks again and reposed himself calmly to sleep.

Then occurred an incident which, had I it not from undoubted authority, I should hesitate to relate. The witnesses are not to be doubted. The bear perceived

¹A somewhat similar incident was related in a magazine article some time ago as having happened in 1874.

the walrus sunning himself on the rock, for he had discarded his icy resting-place, and looked down on him. The walrus slept peacefully, unconscious of danger; the bear rose upright, and then the spectators perceived that the animal had a large stone in his paws.

"Whatever is he going to do?" exclaimed Tom. "He can't be intending to throw the stone at the walrus."

"He is, though," said George. "I have heard of such an incident before. The attack of a bear on a walrus by slinging a stone at him has been related by a celebrated Arctic voyager. I think I have seen a picture of the occurrence."

"Surely not," said Tom. "But look! The bear is going to throw the stone. Well done, David!"

Tom was quite right. The bear had grasped the block of stone and was at that moment engaged in despatching it at the head of the unsuspecting walrus. Crash came the great stone upon the thick cranium of the pachyderm, and crunch went the bones. The walrus wobbled over, and then moved no more—he was stunned!

"Poor walrus!" said Arthur, "I wish we could have saved him. Now for the bear; he will go for the blubber."

The party pulled manfully on, as the sail had been lowered, and in a few minutes, before the bear had come down the rocks, the boys had their guns and Angus his rifle ready. The animal came lumbering on as usual, but when he saw the assembled party he stopped and seemed rather inclined to turn round and retire.

But the smell of walrus was too tempting. He had earned his dinner and intended to eat it. So he came on growling.

"Be ready—surround him," cried Angus.

The moment was rather a critical one, for Bob and Tom were young to begin bear-hunting, and the animal was really a very formidable specimen of the Bruin family. If he chased the boys he would soon overtake them, for the bear is a quick runner notwithstanding his size.

Angus was ready with his rifle. George had the other rifle. The younger ones had shot-guns, and kept at a greater distance.

"I'll pepper him," said rash Tom.

He fired, but the shot made little impression on the great bear, which immediately turned and rushed at Tom.

"Run, Tom," shouted Angus. "Run for your life!"

Tom was swift of foot, and throwing away his gun, he darted off. The bear followed, merely smelling at the gun as he passed, and then he set himself at an apparently leisurely, but really swift pace to overtake Tom. Tom turned aside, climbed the rocks, and reached easier ground; but the bear could climb too, and in a moment was on the lad's track and out of sight beyond the cliff.

Meanwhile Angus and George had started off to intercept the bear at the corner of the beach, but Tom's turn up the rocks had thrown them out. So they hurried to the right to gain the summit—a little distance, but before they gained the top a cry was heard, and Tom came flying through the air from the top of the rocks—a desperate leap some eighteen feet in perpendicular height—down to the water. Most fortunately the place where he descended was nearly clear of ice. Plash he fell into the water with a tremendous noise, and before anyone could go to his rescue the bear came tumbling over heavily.

With a tremendous thud the animal struck the ground and essayed to rise. Angus rushed forward, while George and Arthur hurried to rescue Tom,

whom they quickly pulled out. After the crack of Angus' rifle and a charge of shot at close range from Bob, another bullet from Angus, settled Mr. Bruin. The great animal fell dead; and Tom came up dripping and freezing. His clothes were quickly a mass of ice.

"You'll never get over this wetting," said George. "What made you leap so far? Couldn't you have scrambled down?"

"The beast was close to me," cried Tom, shivering with nervous excitement. "It was a case of kill or cure. But I am not wet through; I have those seal-skin things on. But perhaps we had better return to the schooner."

"No; yonder is an igloo. You can dry your clothes there, and get thawed quickly. We will send the Huskies after the bear. The boat will be safe in the little creek here, and we shall have plenty of time to reach the schooner after. Quick march."

Tom hurried away with Angus, while George and the others remained to secure the boat. This was soon accomplished, and then they followed the tracks of Angus and Tom across the island, which was fortunately still united to the mainland by an ice-floe.

"There are the bee-hives we noticed yesterday," said Angus. "Cheer up, Tom; you will soon be dried."

"I am feeling rather numbed," said poor Tom. "My fingers and legs are almost senseless; I am afraid I cannot go much farther."

"You must," cried Angus. "Here, George!" he shouted; "quick. Come here!"

George and the others hurried up; and then, Angus seizing Tom on one side, George supporting him on the other, the miserable company made the best of their way towards the Esquimaux huts, which were now being replaced gradually by tents for the summer.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN IGLOO—A TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE—A DREADFUL NIGHT—THE IGLOO IS WALLED UP—WHAT'S TO BE DONE?



INTER, however, had not yet taken its leave of the Ungava district. As the boys advanced a sudden snow squall was observed in the north-east. The heavy clouds massed together, and Angus predicted what he in nautical phrase called "a dirty night."

"I am glad we secured the boat well," remarked George. "We put her quite in-shore in a sheltered nook, and I think even a north-easter will have some trouble to find her out."

"We shall have some trouble to find her if the snow squall lasts as long as I fear. Spring, you see, is tardy up here. Captain Morris was pretty correct. Now, George, it's a race to the igloo."

The north-east squall came rapidly over the Straits, the last effort, as it happened, of "rude Boreas," who, after sending that parting shot at Ungava, behaved himself wonderfully well. Still, he had made up his mind to go a little out of his way to show the travellers what he could do even in the Arctic spring, and he certainly surprised them. The sky got of a pitchy darkness, and then was flecked with snow-flakes. These thickened and multiplied to an extent that can

scarcely be credited by those who have never seen a northern storm.

It was an extremely fortunate circumstance for our explorers that Angus had so well ascertained the direction in which the igloos lay. These large beehive-shaped huts were not far distant, and after ten minutes' struggling, impelled rather than impeded by the wind, the adventurers found themselves, in a perfect whirlwind of snow, in front of a snowbank not quite consolidated and a cluster of snow-houses beyond.

But not a person was visible—no light could be perceived. Generally, and always in winter, a lamp is kept burning in the igloo to guide wayfarers, for the Esquimaux are very hospitable to strangers. On this occasion, however, the explorers were doomed to be disappointed. The igloo was untenanted!

"We must enter at anyrate," cried Angus. "We cannot remain out here in the storm. The place inside will be warm, and I have fortunately a little cordial with me which will serve us."

"I have some dried meat in my satchel," said Arthur. "I took it out of the boat."

"Well thought of, Arthur. We shall want it, I daresay. Now for the igloo."

While Angus and his party are endeavouring to obtain admission to the deserted village of a far different type to "sweet Auburn," we will explain the nature and appearance of an *igloo*, which really means a seal-hole. It is impossible to decide whether or not "The Race" (Innuits) learned the construction, or rather the design, of their huts from the seal. The igloo is the winter dwelling; the toupic, the summer tent. The Esquimaux in the western part of Labrador, and in other places where they erect more permanent habitations, dwell in huts of fairly substantial construction. But up at Ungava, at the time we are

speaking of, the natives clung more to the nomad conditions of life, and the snow igloo, and in summer the skin tent, preserving in their interior arrangements very much the same features, were the only shelter available. In more civilized places, such as Hopedale (in Labrador), the Christian Esquimaux did live in dirty hovels called huts made of poles and roofed with earth cast on the poles, as our voyagers afterwards noted.

The mode of constructing an igloo is simple in the extreme. The material is snow. There is a tunnel leading to the entrance, which is barred by a block of snow or ice that turns on a pivot and closes the doorway. The building of an igloo can easily be completed in a couple of hours, and it is frequently placed, when circumstances will admit of it, over running water, which gives greater warmth and saves the trouble of melting the snow for liquid.

The hard snow is cut into blocks with an ivory or bone blade or "knife," which is rather curved. [There are specimens of these knives and of many other Esquimaux articles, spears, &c., in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford.] A circular space is already marked out, inside of which one individual stands and lays the blocks, eighteen inches by six, in regular order round the circle. By degrees the house is formed, getting narrower and narrower towards the top in beautiful proportion, like a white dome of pure marble.

At last only a small aperture at the top remains uncovered, and the man is inside all this time, for he can from within see much better whether the blocks are properly united or not. The hut is now completed by dropping in the block which completely incloses the igloo builder, the house being about eight feet in height and about fifty feet round, or fourteen to sixteen feet in diameter, according to circumstances.

Plenty of light percolates through the snow, unless the moon and the aurora be equally invisible with the sun. The lamp or *ikkumer* is suspended from the roof-block; the heat inside is excessive, so much so that the inhabitants wear little, if any, clothing when at home.

But we have left the builder inside. The man cuts out a place in the rear of the hut, and then with more blocks he builds up the beds, or rather, bed-place, which extends some distance around the wall. On this snow platform furs are spread, and on the furs, frequently quite nude, the family sleeps, "packed like herrings," but always ready to make room for a stranger. Each individual covers himself or herself as they list, and there they sleep amid the remains of seal-flesh and all kinds of refuse, the heads of the sleepers towards the centre of the hut, face upwards. Overhead is the burning lamp, all around the cooking utensils, the remains of supper, blood, raw frozen walrus, seals' entrails, of which soup is made, and the never-washing Esquimaux,—blubber and grease and fat.

Notwithstanding all these drawbacks the Esquimaux appear to be a healthy race when they do not come in contact with civilized people. But small-pox and consumption—legacies, with other illnesses, from the Christians of Europe and America—have nearly improved the Esquimaux off the face of the earth of Labrador, and even in Greenland they do not increase.

We will now return to our travellers, who were seeking admission to the igloo in the still darkened atmosphere, thick with snow.

Angus having had some experience soon found the opening at the back, away from the sea, and, assisted by George and the boys, managed to pull away some blocks and effect an entrance. The hut was apparently untenanted, but a curious odour struck upon the senses.

The smell was like oil—as if a lamp had not been long extinguished.

"We must remain here," whispered Bob. "Can you see anything, Arthur?"

"Not yet," he replied. "Bring Tom here. Here is a locker or settee. That will do nicely—are you warmer, Tom?"

"Much warmer," he replied as the others did all they could to circulate the blood. As they continued to chafe him the hut became sensibly warmer, and after a little cordial the party felt decidedly more cheerful.

The snow by degrees closed up the aperture, but the light was very dim. In exploring the hut a vessel of water was found and some food. A search, blind-man fashion, with a stick was also made in the roof, and a small lamp found burned out. That accounted for the smell of the oil.

"There is someone here," whispered Arthur, who had been searching around the wall and come to the other side of the bed platform. "Here is a native; shall I stir him up?"

"No; let him sleep," whispered George. "He might attack us suddenly. But I wonder at his lying here alone when the tribe have apparently moved."

"They were all hereabouts yesterday," replied Arthur.

"Yes; but they have gone on along the coast, no doubt. Perhaps the man is sick and left behind," said Angus.

"Not really!" exclaimed George. "Let us clear out. Suppose he has died of some infectious illness!"

"We shall not hurt. At least I am more afraid of perishing in the snow-storm than of staying here. Have you any matches or tinder?"

"I have a few matches, and have carefully preserved them to light a pipe. We may as well smoke. Per-

haps the old gentleman will wake up and entertain us," said George.

Tom was now quite warm again. Thanks to the waterproof skin shirt he wore he had not suffered a complete ducking. The warmth of the igloo and his own bodily heat had by this time thawed his half-frozen outer dress; although he felt exceedingly uncomfortable he was not in any immediate danger, and his spirits rose rapidly.

"The clouds are clearing," said Arthur. "In an hour I hope we shall be on board again with old Cecil."

"Not likely," replied Angus. "I suspect Captain Morris has run to windward and will not return until the squall clears. Meantime we can remain here or go on to the village and seek shelter in a tent. We are very well here."

"I don't quite like the occupant. Let's have a light," said George. "Oh!" he exclaimed; "I have only three lucifers left. What a bore!"

"One will do. Now close up and awake the old gentleman. Wouldn't Cecil enjoy this!"

Tom alone remained recumbent on the snow platform, covered with fur-lined garments and feeling as warm as a toast.

George and the others advanced. Some peered over Tom's body, some went round and stood at the further side of the bed-platform, which was rather smaller than usual.

"Now, George, show us a light," said Angus.

George struck the match and held it up. As it blazed brightly the intruders all started back. The light fell upon the face of a dead woman!

"How awful!" cried George. "I can't stay here."

Tom leaped to his feet with an exclamation of horror, and the lads were about to rush out when Angus interposed.

"Stay where you are," he cried authoritatively. "Do not leave the hut! What harm can a poor dead Esquimaux do us? Let us see whether she is actually dead or not?"

Another match and a small screw of paper lighted up the hut for a moment. The hurried examination revealed the fact that the poor creature must have died quite lately and apparently of old age. The food and water were untouched; the furs and skins which had been laid over her were undisturbed. She lay with a peaceful expression upon her smoke-dried and hard-lined lineaments.

The circumstances evidently indicated that the cruel custom of the Esquimaux—the eaters of raw meat (*aski-mow*)—had been carried out. The aged female's time had come. The *angelok* or medicine man, the astrologer of the tribe, had no doubt declared that it was no use to attempt to prolong her useless life. So the poor old creature had been placed in the igloo, hurriedly constructed for the purpose out of the frozen but already disintegrating snow-blocks. Into her last resting-place she had been carried and left to die alone.

Poor creature! It was the custom. She knew that. She had seen many others interred in the "living tombs" year after year. Had it ever, Angus wondered, occurred to her that some day sickness or old age would lay hands on her too, and that she then would be carried out of the village into her new resting-place, her marble-white hut, and left to die? Does it ever occur to any of us, and does the impression remain in our minds, that some day *our* time will also arrive, and we shall be carried out to the grave—dead?

Poor heathen Esquimaux! There you lay in your sad resting-place, there you had lain for two days, watching the dim dying lamp in the roof, typical of your own flickering life. The lamp lasted the longer.

The food and water longer still. She was of no use—left to die! But did any idea cross her mind, on that terrible night when death entered the sealed-up igloo, of future life? Not if it was to be like this on earth!

No, your life had been one of drudgery, toil, and trouble. Your husband says you are "no use" to him any longer. You cannot now carry his baggage in your hood; no longer can you fetch his pipe, light it, puff it into blast, and hand it to him quickly; while your warm-clad and "mittened" lord waited as your numbed fingers prepared it for him! No more can the withered frame thaw the frozen gloves in your bosom for your husband, whose hands must not suffer. You can no longer warm them for him on your hands those stiff and frozen gloves. The frozen boots and stockings can no longer be beaten and dried by you. You now cannot keep awake all night in this unthankful work. So "let her go, she is no use!" says your husband. Bury her alive!

So she was buried. The igloo was constructed; the bed-place arranged. Upon this she was laid. Water and seal-meat placed within reach. The dim lamp suspended in the roof. The aperture was closed up, and the "useless" woman left to die. No one would come near her again.

The whole party in the hut were profoundly sad. Should they bury her? If they did the snow would soon melt away and leave the poor body exposed. So after a whispered consultation, as if they all feared to arouse the poor sleeper, it was decided to leave the hut as they found it.

The clouds were clearing away, and the light was better. It was now nearly night-time, and would scarcely be darker. Sunrise would soon come, and then they would escape to the boat again.

Suddenly a noise at the rear of the hut alarmed them. Human voices were heard. The Esquimaux

had come past and found the "door" had been forced open. No doubt they fancied the wolves or the foxes had done this, and perhaps the natives would shoot their arrows into the hut.

"Keep quiet," said Angus. "Let them alone, they will soon go away. Keep quite still."

The men departed, and fatigue overcame the explorers. Without a word one by one they all lay down on the floor except Tom, who remained on the edge of the platform still, and in a few minutes, notwithstanding the grewsome surroundings and the uncertainty of the morrow, they were all fast asleep.

The sun rose; the gray clouds chased each other across the sky. The winter had finally departed. Spring or summer had come in with a bound. One of those delightful Labrador days—and a fine day in Labrador is an experience to be cherished—was born. Still the explorers slept on undisturbed in the hut tenanted by the dead.

The daylight plainly revealed what the glimmer of twilight and paper had but faintly outlined. The poor woman was dead, emaciated to a degree, but the sleepers at her side and around her were happily unconscious of the sight.

Angus was the first to awake, and in a moment he was on his feet. The daylight told him where he was, and he recalled all the circumstances immediately. He proceeded to the back part of the hut, and in a second he perceived what had happened, and the reason why the Esquimaux had visited the igloo at night.

Angus hastened to awake his companions; they slowly rose rubbing their eyes, and actually complaining of the heat.

"Quick, quick," cried Angus. "No loitering. We are in a fix. It will require all our strength to get out of it."

"A fix!" exclaimed George, who was only too anxious

to quit the hut. "What fix? Let us be off, Angus. Tom looks all right again!"

"I feel pretty well," he replied, "and am quite ready to start. I fancy we all are."

They all assented and made ready.

"Let us be off," said Arthur. "This place is very stifling."

"It's very well to say be off," said Angus, who had been carefully examining the wall of the igloo. "But I am not certain whether we can get out."

"Why not?" cried Arthur in alarm.

"Because the Esquimaux have fastened up the aperture, and we have no means of digging our way out. All our harpoons and things are in the boat!"

"This is a fix indeed," said George. "What are we to do now?"

CHAPTER XX.

A FIX!—THE BEAR PAYS A VISIT TO THE VISITORS—
A TARDY ESCAPE—ESQUIMAUX DOGS—THE RETURN.



HERE was no doubt whatever the young explorers were in a "fix," as George expressed it. The hut was quite closed up, and although within a day, perhaps within a few hours, the heat of the sun would in a great measure thaw the snow, the danger was very real. Food was wanting, water, save what they could obtain from the snow, was lacking, and worse than all, Captain Morris would be cruising about in a state of great anxiety.

There was no immediate danger of starvation, for if the worst came to the worst the seal-meat could be made available for sustenance until the snow could be battered down; but it was not so easy to do this as some have supposed. The blocks, hard frozen, would require some time to melt, and while this process was going on, the chances of an attack by a bear or the interruption of a pack of foxes or wolves were incidents to be expected.

Such an occurrence as either inroad would be a serious contingency for the party in the hut. Unarmed how could they expect to cope with a bear, much less with a whole pack of wolves or foxes? Angus was

fully alive to the danger; he had a dagger-knife, and each of the lads had strong clasp-knives. With these they could make a breach in the wall of snow; but as they could not all work at once the progress would be slow.

"We have no time to deliberate," said Angus after a pause, breaking the silence which had ensued upon George's remark. "Let us get to work at once and dig ourselves out. I will take the first 'shift.'"

"I will help you here," said George. "Then Arthur and Bob or Tom will relieve us. We shall soon manage it."

"I will be like Guy Fawkes digging a hole under the Parliament House," said Arthur. "We will fancy ourselves the conspirators. Who will be Guy?"

"You, of course," retorted Tom.

"I will be Guy, then. You, Tom, will be Catesby. Bob shall be Wright."

"He generally is," remarked the lad referred to.

"Is what?" said Angus, as he plunged his knife between the lately frozen blocks.

"Right," retorted Bob. "Don't you see?"

"Go on, Arthur," said Angus with a groan. "The boy is quite beyond argument." Arthur continued—

"Angus shall be Percy—"

"Because he's perse-vering," suggested Bob aside.

"And George shall be Rookwood," concluded Arthur.

"There; now, conspirators, go ahead."

"You have entirely omitted one very important personage," remarked George. "Your memory does not quite serve you, Arthur."

"Who was that one?" asked Arthur.

George was too busy digging to reply at once; at length he said, "Winter!"

"Oh, he's outside!" suddenly exclaimed Tom. "We don't want any more winter, thank you, here!"

"Tom is *much* better," remarked Bob, "or he

wouldn't have dared to make such a remark as that, for fear the roof would fall in."

"Bob is jealous," whispered Tom in an audible tone to Arthur, who laughed.

Angus and George exchanged glances. They were secretly delighted to perceive that the boys had little fear of the consequences of the situation, and the elders took very good care to keep them in such good spirits.

They continued to dig hard, each one of the party helping in turn. The hut became very hot, and wrapped up as the boys were they found it most oppressive.

Their outer garments were removed, and then another attack was made on the solid wall-blocks, which bore considerable resemblance to the salt slabs we see carried through the streets in vans sometimes.

"My knife is through," cried Angus at last. "We may congratulate ourselves, fellow-conspirators. The hole is cut into the air—parliament will soon totter to its foundation!"

"The conspirators heard a mysterious bell, I think," said Arthur, who had evidently studied the subject. "We have no bell—hullo—listen!"

A growling sound was heard at that moment.

"Here's the mysterious bellow, at anyrate," said Bob. "Bet it's a bear!"

"Very likely," said Angus. "We must mind what we are about. Silence, Bob! no jokes, please. We have all been rather too forgetful already," he added, glancing across the hut at the poor body wrapped in its shroud of furs and skins—a silent protest.

"Stand ready, George. The bear is coming—I can hear him breathing," said Angus.

"There is another aperture," panted George. "We can easily remove that block now. Listen!"

All remained perfectly silent. The sounds uttered by the bear were perfectly audible. He came lumping

along, sniffing and uttering now and then some muttered growls which were by no means pleasant to the ears of the imprisoned party in the igloo.

"This is a worse strait than ever," whispered Arthur to Bob, who nodded appreciation and replied with a wink—

"Bear-in Strait, you mean."

There was no time to reply to this retort, for the bear had stopped and had scented the party, or more likely the seal-meat in the hut had attracted him.

"Attention!" whispered Angus. "He will break through. We must endeavour to disable him if we possibly can. Fortunately we shall take him at a disadvantage. Strike steadily, George, when you do strike."

George nodded. He was a man of few words in danger, and there was no time for parley. He and Angus, with handkerchiefs wrapped tightly round their hands and knife-handles, stood one on each side of the loosened block of snow, and waited.

"When I say *Strike*, go at him," whispered the lieutenant. "We will give him something to roar for, at anyrate."

The boys were quite silent now. They read in the determined features and watchful eyes of Angus Fowler, and the compressed lips and firmly-knit muscles of George Hamilton, that a severe struggle was imminent. The bear was quite unconscious of the preparations made to welcome his arrival, and he proceeded leisurely to pull aside the blocks.

Such a feat required little exertion from him. His powerful paws and claws quickly tore away a considerable portion of the wall of the igloo. His paws disappeared, and with a most unconcerned air, without any appearance of ferocity, but wearing a kind of conscious air of reserve power in his face, Bruin thrust his head and neck through the aperture he had made.

"Oh for a rifle!" muttered Angus. "Are you ready, George?"

"Yes, Angus," replied his friend.

"Then, strike!"

Both men uplifted their arms, and with a simultaneous thrust, into which each one threw the whole weight of his body and force of arm, buried the knives in the shaggy white-clothed body of the bear.

A stupefied look of terror came into Bruin's eyes, but only for a moment; he threw back his head and growled fiercely. The young men held tightly; the blades came out from amid the fur; blood flowed freely over the dirty-white coat of the brute.

"Again," shouted Angus; "*strike!*"

But the bear did not wait; he pulled his head back and tore down an enormous mass of the wall in his rage. Then, standing on his hind-legs, he opened his arms for a rush and a hug. His enormous mouth was wide open; the cruel-looking teeth could be plainly counted. He was a huge brute, and the younger boys, Tom and Bob, were terrified.

"Oh, Angus!" cried the former, "what *shall* we do?"

Angus made no answer. He stood firm and with flashing eyes awaited the attack. On the other side stood George, cool and phlegmatic apparently; but the heaving chest told a tale of heart-beating and quick breathing which belied the quiet features. We learned afterwards from both young men that never in all their lives had they been in such a terrible fright, or "funk," as Angus more forcibly expressed it. But Tom declares neither of them betrayed it at the time.

"It was kill or be killed," said Angus afterwards. "George and I preferred the former."

The bear advanced almost upright and dashed against the wall. For once he had miscalculated. The aperture was not high enough to admit him. His head struck against the unmoved blocks, and though they

gave way he was puzzled for a second or two. That pause was his death-warrant.

Seeing the region of the heart exposed Angus made a desperate lunge with his dagger-knife, and buried it to the hilt in the bear's chest. George ably seconded the attack, and received an ugly scratch as he retreated. The bear fell forward, bringing down several feet of the wall, and tumbled headlong into the hut, but was not dead.

"Run for your lives!" shouted Angus, catching at George's hand. "Run, boys—run!"

Arthur, Tom, and Bob darted out at the side. George, bleeding profusely, came more slowly; and Angus remained with him to bind his arm. The shoulder was badly torn; but fortunately the thick clothing and under-clothing had in some measure protected the brave fellow, and he said that no very serious mischief had been done.

He bled a great deal, and as he retreated he endeavoured to stop the blood. As the lads hurried away to the boat the barking of dogs was heard, and several Esquimaux with a pack of dogs came rushing over the thawing snow towards the hut.

"Nenook! nenook!" they cried.

"Nenook!" echoed Angus; "igloo!"

That was sufficient. The whole party continued their way—the dogs delighted at the idea of a fight with the bear, the Esquimaux pleased at the prospect of fur and flesh.

One man stopped, however, and pointed to George's lacerated shoulder.

"Neggo-mai," he said (not good). "Toupic."

Angus understood his meaning. "Abb," he replied, nodding.

Then the Esquimaux turned and led the way rapidly towards a tent made of skins, into which he beckoned the two young men.

Angus turned, and on the top of the low cliff perceived the three lads watching the fight between the bear and the dogs. Waving his arm as a signal, which Arthur acknowledged, Angus followed George into the toupic.

The arrangements of the tents were much the same as in the hut and igloo. The women there were three—two young and not ill-looking, but "lumpish." Their hands and feet were small, the fingers tapered, but short, elastic, soft, and flabby. The faces of the women are plump.

The woman and the girls were seated on the "beds," sewing seal-skin for boots, apparently. They all smiled when Angus and George were ushered in; but when they perceived the latter visitor was wounded the woman rose, and in obedience to the man's orders came to dress it. She washed the torn flesh with warm blood of the seal, and at once clapped a piece of fat upon the lacerated parts. While this very simple remedy for excluding the cold air was being fastened upon the arm and the arm itself supported by a sling, the man hurried away to see the bear killed.

Bruin meantime had had a bad time of it. His relentless enemies, the Esquimaux dogs, had worried and snarled at him persistently, while the brave Esquimaux had attacked him with spears. The dogs howled and snapped, the hunters prodded at him. Turning round with deep and angry growls, his mouth open, the unfortunate bear rushed hither and thither at the dogs, which managed to escape—all but one, which was caught between the tremendous paws and squeezed nearly flat in Bruin's angry embrace.

The hunters had quite as much as they could manage. They were not armed, and so the contest continued for some time. At length the bear began to feel the effects of the wounds he had received. Poor, brave bear! you have fought well and long, but it is

no use—your fate is sealed, Bruin! The dogs rushed in; the men followed, thrusting mercilessly; and at last the bear succumbed to his many injuries.

Then the boys came down and made their way to the hut before the hunters and the dogs, which latter are occasionally troublesome. Handsome animals these pure Esquimaux dogs are. The canine holidays were about to commence, for during the winter there is plenty of work for the dogs. In summer they have a life of ease, intermixed with many disputes and fighting, in which the weakest of the party is always bullied by the others. The Labrador dogs are particularly quarrelsome and destructive to other animals, for no pigs or other domestic pet can be reared in the same place.

A true tale illustrative of this ferocity is told by the Abbé Ferland. A settler in Labrador had procured a fine Newfoundland dog, which became a great favourite, and in consequence an object of great jealousy to the Labrador dogs. But the latter were too cautious to annoy the stranger when his master was present. They waited quietly till one day when he was absent; then they all set upon the Newfoundland dog, killed him, and dragged his body to the sea, thinking it would be washed away. But when the master returned he noticed that the dogs looked very guilty about something. They had a hang-dog expression which betrayed them immediately. The settler searched and soon found the dead and mangled body of the Newfoundland on the beach, where it had been left by the retiring waves.

There is another tale related concerning a goat, which managed to repel all attacks and give the dogs a lesson in the use of the horn as a weapon of defence. So well did the goat play the horns that the dogs were glad to escape, and ever afterwards were considerable friends with the bold *Capricornus*. The great instru-

ment which keeps these dogs in subjection is the long Esquimaux whip—a lash of about thirty-five feet, and a handle of about a quarter that length. With this tremendous weapon a driver can touch any dog without touching the others, and can flick a mosquito from the leader's tail—almost. The effect of a lash from this whip on the human subject would be to bare the bone completely, if vindictively applied.

The dogs on a march stray about; and as they are loaded, the chances are the load is spoiled. Seal-meat or such food of course is always good in the Esquimaux' eyes and never hurts. The animals tussle and range about, and when the master halts all the dogs halt too, and come to lick and sniff him in a disagreeably affectionate manner, which at times provokes a blow. This the dog never resents upon his master. As the clown in the pantomime, when struck by harlequin, turns and pommels the pantaloon, so the dog, struck by his master, turns upon his inoffending canine neighbour and "pitches into him." Of course a free fight is the pleasing and invariable result.

In the *mêlée* the loads are quite disregarded, each dog fights for himself and ignores what has been committed to his care. Your provisions are strewn about in all directions; the tumult is general. The whip scarcely mends matters, until, at length quieted, the animals proceed to devour all they can of the food you have so carefully provided, to last you for a few days' journey!

Then, when you camp for the night, or when your hut is built, or your igloo raised from the snow, the dogs will do all they know to enter in and dwell there. Sometimes they may be permitted to enter, but experience points in another direction. One animal who watches just without is surrounded by his canine associates, who, with noses as close to the entrance as they dare be placed, sniff up the lovely smell of rancid

oil and blubber, of burning lamp and general greasiness. If he succeeds in seizing a piece of meat a general scamper ensues, and his life is a burthen until he has bolted it, or till it is taken from him, in which (latter) case the attentions of the pack are turned to the new possessor.

So much for the dogs, or rather tamed wolves, for there is more of the latter animal in the Esquimaux' servants. As for the Esquimaux themselves they are a prehistoric race, dying out from civilization.

As Angus and his companions saw them that day we have them painted in George's descriptive prose: "Greasy, contented, thoughtless, thriftless animals, I call them," he says. "Hospitable in their way, if you can eat rancid or raw frozen seal or walrus, sup the entrail-soup, and drink the blood. If that means hospitality then the 'Innuits' are kind. I don't like it!"

We need add little to this description. The young people were, it must be confessed, only too anxious to clear out of the toupic. The air even in the tent was close and unpleasant. Yet the Esquimaux is quite happy. He is warm; he eats till he is gorged. He sleeps and eats again. He will go for days without food, and yet eat in three days as much as a civilized man would devour in seven. He will "seal" and hunt, but never fish if he can help it. He has no ideas; he imitates, and is as primitive as any human creature can possibly be.

But the poor creatures showed much kindness to our travellers. They guided them to the shore, and in return for a few beads and some "plug" tobacco got out and launched the boat. The snow had nearly melted, except in the ravines and fissures. The insects were beginning to come out; the green moss and tiny flowers even in Ungava began to peep through. One day had made a difference indeed. The sun was actually warm, and as the boys pulled back to the place where they

expected to find the schooner, they confessed they much preferred the cabin to the *igloo*.

"I wonder what Captain Morris will say," remarked Arthur. "We have had a narrow escape."

"Yes, indeed," replied George. "I have had a nasty scratch too. But that blubber stuff is very soothing."

"I feel all right again," said Tom. "But uncommon stiff! Caught a chill, I suppose."

Then Angus interposed firmly.

"We have had quite enough larking," he said. "We seem to have entirely overlooked the reason for our coming here. As soon as we can, boys, we will run down the coast and endeavour to find the Talisman. Then, hurrah for old England and Barnstaple!"

"Hurrah for Pilton!" cried Arthur, "and three cheers for the girls we've left behind us!"

CHAPTER XXI.

A WELCOME—ABOUT SEALING—A WHITE-WHALE HUNT
—A CASTAWAY—A SCARE ON BOARD.



THREE hearty cheers were given as requested, and then an answering gun notified the rowers that the schooner was beyond the point. In a few minutes the trim little vessel was perceived standing out into the bay amid the floating ice and rippling waves which lifted blocks merrily in the sunshine.

"Well, I am precious thankful to see the old *Annie* again," remarked George. "I am sure we have had enough of the natives."

"They are very interesting," said Angus.

"And odorous," added Arthur.

"We never saw them catch a seal," said Tom.

"No; I wanted to watch them at it," added Bob. "But I daresay we shall have an opportunity."

Angus made no answer. He was occupied with his thoughts, which had flown back to Annie, his betrothed. George, too, was thinking of Nellie, and wondering what she would say when she heard of his accident. They were both anxious to have letters from home; but they knew none could reach them until Hopedale or Rigolette had been gained.

But the captain's cheery voice aroused them from their reverie. Cecil welcomed them warmly too.

"Boat ahoy, Mr. Fowler! Glad to see you, sir. We thought mayhap Davy Jones had gotten you. We would have landed had the storm permitted; we are beating up now. Right glad to see you again."

Fowler replied to the greeting, and in a very short time the boat came alongside, and the party somewhat fatigued reached the deck of the schooner, where Cecil almost embraced them.

There was much shaking of hands; greetings were exchanged with the crew, who were equally glad with the captain to see the young men back again. A great deal of sympathy was bestowed upon Tom and George, who were both carefully nursed and treated. Tom was all well again in a couple of days; but George's arm gave him a great deal of trouble and considerable pain for some time afterwards.

The adventures were recorded over a very hearty meal. The captain listened with much interest. He laughed at the attempt to shoot the guillemot, and promised Tom another chance lower down the coast, where he could obtain a little "gunning" and some trout-fishing.

"But I want to catch a seal," said the lad.

"It's getting a little late in the season for seals. The sealers will soon be off north, or down east for cod-fishing. Perhaps we shall see a Husky sealer; but you see the ice is breaking up fast."

"But, captain, surely that is the time to catch seals," remarked Cecil.

"Yes, with nets. But your Husky sealer in the winter lies down on the ice with his hood over his head and his harpoon handy. At a distance I declare you might take him for a seal. There he will remain over a seal-hole in the ice for hours and hours as patiently as a cat. Then, when the seal comes up for air, the Husky harpoons him and drags him out."

"Rather cold work," said Arthur.

"Yes, and slow work too," said the captain. "Sometimes a bear will come along and take the seal right out of your hands. At other times he will lie down and watch at a seal-hole all day, and catch the thing at last. They are spry, are them bears, I can tell you."

"I haven't seen any reindeer," said Bob. "I quite expected to see some in the Esquimaux village, but we didn't."

"They are gone to hunt them in the interior, I suspect," said the captain. "You may see some yet."

"Can't we catch some seals?" asked Arthur. "We have done nothing."

"Well, I don't know," said the captain with a hearty laugh. "Seems to me you've done a good deal. Hunting bears is something, isn't it?"

"Yes, but a seal—"

"What kind of seal?" inquired the captain.

"What kind! why, the usual kind, I suppose. A seal is a seal, isn't it?" said Cecil.

"When is a seal not a seal?" interrupted Bob. "Can you tell that, Captain Morris?"

"No, Master Bob, I can't, unless when it's a 'harpe,' or a 'jar!'"

"Don't know what you mean, captain. How can a seal be a jar? You mean a door is ajar?"

"No, I don't," replied the captain. "There's seals and seals. There's harpe seals, jars, harbour, doter, hood-seals, and others—square-flippers, they call them. So you see a seal *may* be a harpe, or a harbour, or a jar!"

"That's not the answer. When is a seal not a seal? Give it up? Well, when it's a *signet*!"

"A cygnet seal? well, yes," replied the captain. "I see it. Not bad for your ideas; I've heard worse—and better. Now, sir, I'll tell ye what ye will see," added the captain, turning suddenly to Arthur. "You will see a white-whale chase."

"A whale!" exclaimed all the boys. "Where?"

"There in the bay. Look! there go the kyacks; I thought so. We will run down as we tack out and see the fun."

"How splendidly these fellows manage the kyacks!" said Cecil.

"Oh, they're easily managed," replied Tom, who was a good canoeist.

"Very easily I should say," added Arthur.

"Ah, that's all you know about them. Let me tell you, it isn't every Esquimaux who can manage a kyack properly," replied Angus. "It takes years of study."

"They're dreadful dangerous things," added the captain in confirmation. "You want all your wits and all your hands in a kyack. They're as crank as a straw, and your life is just suspended in it!"

"These fellows appear quite at home," remarked Bob. "What's that thing they have hanging to the harpoon?"

"That is a 'dan' or seal-skin inflated with air to tell the hunter where the prey is, when it rises. I have heard of a man getting entangled in his line, when striking a white whale, and the whale carried the man down. But the harpoon-stick came asunder from the head, and the bladder carried the man up again."

"Wonderful!" remarked Bob.

"And what is more, quite true," said the captain.

"That is certainly most wonderful of all," said Tom. "Look, there's a porpoise!"

"That's the whale," said the captain—"a white whale! He's a small one—about eighteen feet or so—just long enough. He has lovely oil, which won't freeze in a hurry. They come up from Hudson's Bay. Now you'll see the kyacks after him."

Away went the whale, and the kyacks followed. One man got in advance of the others, and the whale dived. Then the man paddled about gently, waiting to see the spout, and keeping his eyes turning about on

all sides of him. By a happy chance the whale happened to rise close by the canoe, when, with unerring aim, the barbed harpoon, to which the seal-skin bladder had been fastened, was darted into the side of the animal.

Away he rushed again, but found it by no means an easy matter to sink with the bladder attached to him. But down he went, and the line paid all out. Then the other kyacks came up, and each rower sat watching for the "dan" to reappear. There it is, the whale is resting. The kyacks rushed with tremendous rapidity over the sea. Three spears were thrown before the half-exhausted animal could dive again. This sealed his fate. He was captured and killed. Then the kyack took him in tow, and returned to shore, while the *Annie* continued her course, leaving Akpatok Island on the larboard quarter, and making for the Straits, where some small islands were now becoming faintly visible.

High bare rocks and hills, even mountains, are the chief natural features up here. Cape Chidleigh recalled some reminiscences of Devonshire to the younger members of the expedition, and a cricket-match, in which an Arthur and a "Ted" took part, was once again warmly discussed in connection with Chidleigh or Chudleigh, whose name had given new life to an old argument.

From Cape "Chudleigh" the schooner made its way along the coast; sometimes close to shore, at other times standing out; and in one of the latter tacks a dim object was perceived right ahead, drifting slowly to the Atlantic. There was much speculation as to what this could be, and the telescope was brought into requisition.

"There's something black on that hummock of ice," remarked Cecil, "but my eyes are not very good yet. What do you say it is, Angus?"

"Looks like a seal—a dead seal huddled up. No; there's fur on it! It is a young bear crouched, I think. Look, captain!"

"Port a bit," said the captain. "Steady! Ah!" he continued after a long look. "Starboard yer helm, Fraser. We'll overhaul that cub, if it is a cub."

"Don't you think it is a bear?" asked Tom.

"No, sir, I do not."

"Then what is it?" persisted Tom.

"That's what I want to know," replied the captain, "and that's why I am running over to starboard to fetch up round the berg yonder. You'll see we shall come round that ice and meet the floating hummocks on the opposite tack."

Considerable curiosity was expressed by the lads generally, and indeed by all on board. The men were clustered forward watching the ice, which was rapidly running to the Atlantic on the current. Caution was very necessary still, although the direction of the schooner with the current did not include so much risk as if she were meeting the ice. Nevertheless, she overtook it, and in one place where the ice had got jammed between two small islands like a frozen canal the *Annie* had actually to plough her way through, the ice being broken with poles to admit her sharp iron-shod bow.

The day was certainly lovely, the scenery wild but picturesque. The widening Strait, the rapidly sailing icebergs, the great open water ahead, dotted with sealers and fishing-boats in the distance eastward, the bold forbidding cliffs, the crevices filled with snow, the multitudinous birds, the not infrequent seal sunning himself—all these, combined with the beautiful uniform tints of blue and white in which nature had arrayed herself, made up a picture which must be seen to be fully appreciated. Alas that we should have to say "We ne'er shall look upon its like again!"

Fine weather, some one may say; can any such be found so far north? Yes, sometimes, and as you descend the bold forbidding coast, cliffs rise up direct from many fathoms in gray and rugged majesty. Those who have explored some parts of the coast of Cornwall, on which the Atlantic billows thunder with incessant roar and swirling, may form some dim idea of the rugged, weather-beaten, harsh, but beautiful cliffs of Labrador. The waves roar ceaselessly, flinging salt upon the hoary sides; the land, not to be outdone, calls in the leverage of frost, and sends many a boulder tumbling into the restless and resistless sea. Down, down for many hundred feet, perhaps, the missiles go, and the water closes over them again in its tremendous play.

Inland, and in sheltered places, Labrador is to a certain extent productive. But the coast swept by the currents of wind and water from the north make it a barren land. The water is frozen for months, and where not actually ice is not much above freezing-point; but the air—the clear, pure, invigorating air—is delicious in summer—when fine. Sometimes it is fearfully hot, and as our voyagers got more eastward they found an awning a necessity in the day-time. The tints of sea and land and sky are alike lovely—blue, purple, and amethyst vie in the contest with purest white, and the rose-pink of sunrise and its setting. To use the words of our travellers, the light seems “filtered through milk,” and this sentence expresses the effect very well.

The day on which our young friends were running down the coast was the introduction to several days which charmed them. Summer had come; nature had thrown off her winter cloak, and appeared in fairy garb as in a transformation scene.

The *Annie* continued to “run down,” and although a careful look-out was necessary she made rapid progress. The iceberg behind which the hummock was

hidden was now on the larboard beam. The massive mountain was making little progress, for the immense depth of the ice below counteracted the force of the surface current to a great extent. The vessel was still pretty far north, remember; so the captain ran past and bore up, then hove to and lay outside the islands in the Straits beyond the track of the berg.

As the schooner cleared the berg the black thing became plainly visible on the hummock, which was rapidly closing on the berg, attracted even in the currents. A boat was lowered. This time Cecil made one of the party, with the captain, and Andrews, and the boys. Angus remained on board with George, to command the ship if necessary.

The captain was steering, and he suddenly exclaimed as he urged the men to pull:

"Thunder! I believe it's a dead body!"

So it was. A poor Esquimaux who had been spearing seals had got drifted away, and in the storm had been frozen to death! He remained in a sitting posture, his head bowed forward on his knees, his spear beside him, and a portion of a dead seal. Clearly he had not died from starvation. He was cold and hard, actually frozen to death on the ice.

"What a terrible fate!" said Cecil. "Poor fellow! What shall we do?"

"Bury him decently," said the captain. "If we leave him here the bears will soon devour him. Let us carry him on board, sew him up in a hammock, and send him on his journey to the Heaven of the Esquimaux, the same as our own, I daresay. Poor creature!"

The crew scarcely liked to carry out the captain's orders at first. They did not like to handle the body. But Captain Morris set them the example, and even Cecil, much against his will, assisted. It was by no means an easy matter to get the crouching figure into

the boat, but at length this was accomplished, and the men pulled back to the schooner.

Angus, who had been watching the whole proceeding through the glass, was ready at the gangway when the boat came alongside.

"So you have discovered it," he said. "I was afraid you would not find a bear. Poor man, he has been frozen while hunting."

"Yes, Heaven knows when. He must have gone to sleep. But he did not die of hunger, for we saw seal-meat on the hummock. The late storm drove him away, and he froze to death the other night. We must bury him!"

A hammock was prepared, and the dead man's frame warmed with a view to undo, if possible, the rigidity of the body. Furs and artificial heat were applied in turn, and every effort made to restore animation, if such restoration were possible. The Esquimaux remained in front of the stove in the sitting posture he had last assumed, and it was, indeed, difficult to believe he was dead. The face had undergone no change, the hands when ungloved were as in life, but whiter, of course. Surely death must have come to him easily. An amulet was around his neck, a charm against evil; how useless the charm now! Poor Esquimaux, your last seal has been caught!

The captain and his assistants left the body and made arrangements for the interment. The carpenter was directed to sew up the poor fellow in the shroud, and preparations were made on deck to bury the body at sunset. The orb declined through the haze, and by degrees became an immense ruby, which glowed through an atmosphere filled with infinitesimal frost-dust, and gave the air the appearance of a glowing fiery furnace surrounded by minute particles of burnished metal red hot, or crimson hot if there be such a temperature. This effect was peculiarly noticeable



326

"THE ESQUIMAUX WAS UNQUESTIONABLY ALIVE."



upon the water, which was steeped in the glowing rays in a path of red light.

Glorious indeed. The dying day—dying to be renewed in a few hours—was to see the poor savage interred in the beautiful sea now awaiting him. The captain wore a sad expression as he turned towards the setting sun, and around him with sympathetic faces were grouped the young travellers. Behind them the major portion of the crew were drawn up. Some of the men were engaged in the cabin.

After a pause the carpenter and three other men came up the companion, tenderly and carefully bearing the Esquimaux. The carpenter was coming backwards, and it seemed as if he tripped in the ledge at the head of the cabin stairs, for he nearly fell, and quite dropped the poor body, uttering a loud cry as he did so.

"Mr. Dale," shouted the captain, "for shame! For shame, sir!"

"Oh, Lord," screamed the carpenter, "he's alive!"

"What!" shouted the captain.

The men who had held up the Esquimaux now deposited the body on deck, and in a moment Angus had darted forward and ripped up the hammock. George, Cecil, and the captain, assisted, or impeded, by other hands, stripped the covering away.


Then the Esquimaux extended his legs and arms. He lay flat on his back on deck; his eyes were shut; but he was unquestionably alive.

"My gracious!" exclaimed the captain, "did anyone ever see or hear the like of this? Something will come out of this. Mark my words!"

The men did; all his hearers marked his words, and had cause to remember them too!

CHAPTER XXII

THE ESQUIMAUX RECOVERED—TOWED BY AN ICEBERG
—A KNOWING HAND—THE CAPTAIN OF THE
"GANNET"—MICKEE SPEAKS HIS MIND.

"ERCIFUL Heaven!" exclaimed the carpenter, wiping his brow. "I feel all over like steam!" At any other time the carpenter probably would have vented his astonishment in stronger language, but now he was utterly taken aback and quite unable even to swear.

"I felt him kick," he continued, "as I was comin' up the companion, and never imagined the cuss was alive! But when we got to the deck I declare he gave me a kick in the stomach which laid me flatter'n a flounder!"

A smile went round, but astonishment had by no means subsided. The reaction was still too powerful to be immediately dissipated. The object of all this solicitude lay helpless on the deck, a picture of misery and death.

"Are you so everlastin' sure he is dead?" said one of the men; "maybe he is only galvanized."

The crew came up peering over each other's shoulders, when suddenly all the ship's company was recalled to duty by the captain shouting:

"All hands wear ship. Look out for that berg!"

The men looked up. The dread iceberg had crept

down upon them; there was little wind now, and what there was came from the south-west against the schooner.

"Look out there!" cried the captain. "Lower the boats; smart, men, or she'll be aboard of us. Hurry up. Mr. Fowler, do you mind handling a pole? Here, lads, stave her off; that's right!"

The gigantic berg came sailing slowly down very quietly, but certainly approaching nearer, as the vessel was also simultaneously attracted by the mass at the same time. There was not much time to lose, and the crew had already launched and were pulling the boats ahead.

"She's risen in the water," remarked the captain, as the schooner's head paid round away from the berg. She has risen. Some of her ballast has broke off below, somehow, and she floats higher."

"That accounts for her drifting faster even against the wind," said Angus.

"Just so," answered the captain. "The tide is turning too and we're in a tight place; too near. We can't tow all night."

"But we can be towed," said Angus meaningly.

"Certainly; but the men will grumble."

"No, they won't," said Angus. "Not my way."

The captain smiled, and looked at the young sailor.

"I've heard of it, sir; never saw it done."

"Saw what?" inquired Cecil and Tom simultaneously.

"Towing by an iceberg," replied Angus.

"Towing by an iceberg!" exclaimed Tom. "That's impossible! You are only chaffing, Angus."

"No, he ain't," said the captain. "There's more things in the Arctic Seas than ever Hamlet knew with all his philosophy, and it never entered the head of that melancholy dark young man that an iceberg can tow a ship. But it can."

"And it will," added Angus. "Eh, captain?"

"Why, certainly, if ye can manage the line."

"I'll do that; you give the orders."

"No, sir; you can be captain. I'll be the commander at present, and stand aside. We are clear, now. Boats in!"

The whistle recalled the boats and the iceberg came along pretty rapidly. The wind had dropped, and the *Annie* drifted helplessly with flapping sails.

The danger had been imminent, and the unfortunate Esquimaux had been neglected. He still lay unconscious on deck, but had been pulled over amidships out of the way.

"Let him lie," said the captain. "I believe he is only intoxicated after all. He's been drinking in a sealer or fishing-boat, or managed to steal a bottle of whisky and indulged in it freely."

When the boats came alongside, Fowler with the captain's consent took the small anchor and the tow-rope. Then he proceeded with the cutter to the iceberg, and after some considerable delay managed to fix the flukes of the anchor firmly in the ice. This was not easy to accomplish, as the sides of the berg were precipitous. But fortunately a kind of platform was discovered as the boat rowed along. In this platform the anchor was fixed, and then the rope gradually taughtened. The schooner proceeded in the proper direction, against the wind, with mainsail brailled up, and the jib flapping, towed by the berg.

"That is the funniest tug-boat I ever saw," said Cecil. "How we would astonish them at Appledore if we came in like this!"

"Just a little," assented George. "But you must first get your iceberg to live in warm climates."

"A freezing machine would do it, I daresay," remarked Tom; "if we only had one big enough!"

"If! Ah! If! There's many an 'if' between the

thought and act, my young friend," remarked the captain. "But the berg is helping us, and if we only can get a slant of wind round the point by morning I'll stand down the Straits direct for Hopedale. We've had enough of Labrador up here, we'll try it lower down among the missionaries."

"Missionaries!" said Arthur. "Why, are there any savages here?"

"Savages! what do you call that?" replied the American, pointing to the still inanimate Husky. "Isn't he a savage? Rather much of a savage too."

"But we never hear of Esquimaux missions," said Cecil. "We have 'Greenland's icy mountains, and India's coral strand,' sung when a lecture is given about African missions or South Sea Islanders, but never about Labrador."

"The Moravians started this business, and they run it still," replied Captain Morris. "They have been at it some time, and do a good trade, as well as a power of good, I believe. But they *trade*."

"Are there many missions?" asked Arthur.

"Four I know of; one yonder at Nain, the next we shall pass to-night, I daresay, at Ok-kak. Then Hebron and Hopedale. They manage to keep the Esquimaux in the neighbourhood and teach them some trade and some religion. But it's mostly up-hill work."

"I daresay it is," said Angus.

"You bet it is. But the Huskies are very docile and quiet. They go to church and sing just like sheep. I mean they *follow* a leader; not sing like sheep, of course. Every year a ship comes from Europe with supplies, and the same ship carries off the valuable trade produce which the missionaries have had with the natives. These articles are sold for the benefit of the society, I hear. It's a hard life in the winter, and bad's the best."

"But I suppose the natives learn cleanliness if not godliness?" interposed George.

"Well, you'll see when you get to Hopedale. Here's a nice specimen of the Christian Esquimaux," added the captain, nodding at the native, who was stirring a little now and then. "That's what civilization has done for him!"

"Is he a Christian?" asked Angus.

"Hope not," said the captain. "But Christians gave him whisky, and when men can't stop at a fair quantity then they are beasts, I say; and worse. Aha! here's our new brother awake."

The Esquimaux had opened his eyes, and when he perceived the captain looking at him he got up and said:

"Goodday!"

"What!" asked the captain in surprise. "Do you talk English?"

"Goodday, sir," replied the man. "Know—talk—good-morrow."

"His English vocabulary is rather limited," said Angus. "Where did you learn English?"

"In the Bay," replied the man.

"Where?" said Angus, turning to the captain.

"In the Bay. He means Esquimaux Bay—Invucktoke, eh?"

The man nodded, and said "In the Bay" again pleasantly. But after this exhibition of his English he subsided, and began again on "Goodday, tomorrow," and finally took refuge in a perfect shower of nods, which seemed to confuse him after a while, for he was silent.

"This is the kind of man you want, Mr. Fowler. He comes from Esquimaux Bay, and may remember something of your uncle's treasure. How long ago is it since the old man was up here for the Company?"

"Oh, many years, fifteen at least. Indeed I am not

quite certain, and it does not matter. We have the bearings of the cairn, and will no doubt be able to find it when we reach Rigolette."

The Esquimaux nodded again, and said Goodday for the sixth time with a freshness which did him credit, considering he had already repeated the greeting so frequently to the same people with no particular result.

"You know it? Rigolette? Mission?" asked Angus deliberately.

The Esquimaux nodded at each word. He evidently understood what was said. Then he suddenly burst out into a torrent of words, which sounded, or rather the spelling of the sound may be written, Cobloonak tuck tu peecomewanga, pilletay.

This was extremely gratifying, and Tom, who had listened intently, said as much.

"What does he want, Cecil?"

"Kina?" asked Cecil of the man.

The Esquimaux repeated the sentence, with the additional suggestion of "Pussay."

"He wants a cat," said Bob. "He distinctly said 'pussay.' Eat pussay?" continued the lad pointing to his mouth.

The man nodded. "Pussay, tyma, goodday."

"You can't have the pussy, old fellow. We have only got one, and we can't spare her."

"'Pussay' is a seal," said Cecil. "I know that 'Cobloonak' is 'Englishman.' 'Pilletay' is 'give.' So I suppose he wants some raw seal. I am afraid we have none."

"Let him catch his own. There will be some on the ice to-morrow, and we can see how he does it. So all parties will be gratified," said Arthur.

The Esquimaux, in default of seal, was quite pleased to devour some dripping-fat, with which delicious and rather rancid viand he smeared himself into a deep

sleep, which lasted until the sun had warmed the mist and brought out the seals, when the schooner had cast off the iceberg and was sailing east again.

"What's your name?" inquired Cecil.

The man shook his head. "Negga-mai," he replied.

"Can't understand," remarked Angus. "Here, let me try him."

Then Angus with solemnity pointed to himself and named himself. Then to Bob, then to Cecil, and so on until he came to the Esquimaux, and paused with extended finger.

"Kinai?" he asked ("What?").

The Esquimaux's stolid face was for a moment lighted up with a ray of intelligence. It was as if a candle had been passed behind the eyes of an animated turnip-head of unwashed appearance.

"Mickee," he replied, tapping his chest.

"Micky!" exclaimed the captain. "He's an Irish boy, bedad!"

"Mickee?"

The man nodded, and Cecil said:

"Mickee means a dog. That's his name, Dog. Bow-wow-wow?"

The light-hearted native nodded again, and after a pause was seized with an original notion which resulted in "Goodday" again, with quite a new emphasis for variety's sake.

After a little nodding and bobbing a seal caught his attention, and he cried "Pussay!" again and again, at the same time handling his spear. The captain made no objection to a boat being launched, and the Esquimaux jumped on the ice, got between the seal and the sea, and in a twinkling he had speared the animal, and then, cutting a large piece of blubber from the raw and quivering shoulder, ate it with much relish. We need not dwell upon this meal, which lasted until nearly the whole seal had been eaten, for there is no greater

glutton and no more patient "faster" than an Esquimaux, who will eat enough for five ordinary men or go without food for days if necessary. Like a camel the Inuit seems capable of drawing sustenance from the reserves in his interior economy.

While the native was devouring the seal Angus called Cecil into the cabin and shut the door.

"Cecil," he said, "the captain was right. This Esquimaux will have an effect upon our voyage. Something will come of his appearance."

The mysterious manner in which the lieutenant delivered himself of this opinion amazed Cecil not a little.

"What on earth do you mean?" he said, with a look of alarm. "Is there anything wrong?"

"Wrong! No, my dear fellow, things all seem perfectly right; but until I am assured we need not say anything to the boys. Do you understand?"

"Do I understand the Sphinx? Really, Angus, you are about as mysterious and almost as solemn. Speak plainly," said Cecil somewhat testily.

"Plainly, then, this Esquimaux will show us where the Talisman lies hidden."

Cecil stared at the young lieutenant, but said nothing. He was quite unprepared for such a disclosure.

"Yes," continued Angus; "I am quite serious. I confess it was rather a wild-goose chase this expedition of ours, but the old uncle knew what he was about. Between you and me, I scarcely think—well, perhaps I am premature, so never mind that—but he was right in sending the lads out. Don't you see why?"

"I think I do," replied Cecil.

"Each of the boys wanted 'ballast' and some toning down. Arthur was too despondent; Bob, too facetious under all circumstances, fitting or otherwise; Tom was too self-confident, and Cecil too—"

He paused and smiled at his friend.

"Well," said Cecil, "what about me?"

"Cecil is a little too retiring; a trifle too modest, and inclined to stand in his own light."

"Better to shade your light than put it on a candlestick and have it blown out by rough winds," remarked Cecil.

"Certainly; but there are glass shades through which the light may penetrate, and Master Sarcil was rather too modest to make his way in the world—too wanting in self-assertion."

"And now you think I am too 'cheeky,' I suppose?" asked Cecil, with some derision in his tone.

"No. I am glad to see you assertive. You will be the more appreciated. A lad who is bumptious is a nuisance; a young man who is conceited is an ass; but a person who values himself properly, when he has reason to do so, will be estimated at his value by others. *Verbum sap!*"

"Thank you," answered Cecil; "I am not quite certain, Angus, whether you are entirely serious, but I am sure you mean well. So now let us return to our Esquimaux and the Talisman."

"Well, as I said, the expedition has done us all good. The meeting with this Esquimaux is very fortunate. His name, you know, is Mickee."

"Yes, I remember it was rather Hibernian, or perhaps I should say Hyperborean," replied Cecil.

"The name that occurs in the packet your uncle gave me is also Mickee," added Angus. "At anyrate, it is a curious coincidence. This man has come up from Invucktoke or Esquimaux Bay. You remember our latitude and longitude as corrected for finding the Talisman is close by that inlet. The name Mickee may be only a coincidence, as your uncle was here many years ago; but the man is not young, and he may tell us something concerning the hidden treasure. The captain said the man would affect our voyage—he was

superstitious only. We are pretty sure the Esquimaux will guide us to the right spot."

"There is certainly reason in what you say," replied Cecil. "Whereabouts are we now?"

"About 63° w. 57° n.," replied Angus. "That island yonder I take to be Ok-kak. There is a village there, and if you like we will land. We may hear something or see something amusing. But until we have questioned the native we will not tell the boys our impressions. George already knows this."

"Very well," replied Cecil. "Let us go ashore if we can. It will do no harm at anyrate. We may see something amusing, as you say."

The young men went on deck, and the island they had caught a glimpse of from the cabin was there plainly visible on the starboard bow. The huts and the curious red chapel belonging to the mission were sufficient to indicate the character of the settlement.

"Can we land yonder, captain?" asked Cecil.

"Ye can if ye like," replied the captain. "There is not much to see unless you want to inspect the village, and you will see as much at Esquimaux Bay. The cape yonder is rather dangerous; anchorage deep. But if you want to see the fishing and sealing, the dressing and the cleaning, you may run inside where those vessels are lying. It's rather far north for the cod-fishers, though. They generally keep below 56°."

"Let us go," said Arthur. "George, you will come?"

"I've no objection," replied George. "We can all go, I daresay. It will be interesting to see how these great fisheries are managed. We are rather late for the seals, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied the captain. "The sealers have pretty well all cleared out by this time. They are nearly all Newfoundland men. They seldom come here."

"How many seals will one ship take?" inquired Cecil.

"The average lies between two thousand and three thousand," replied the captain. "But I have known seven thousand caught. It's nearly all chance, however—a toss-up."

"It must pay," said George.

"Sometimes. The owners pay the expenses of the vessel; the captain receives a commission, ten cents a seal; one half of the remainder of the haul-value then is divided amongst the crew, and the owners get the rest. A seal is worth say three and a half dollars, so you can reckon it up. The skins and blubber only is carried away. Yonder's a fishing-vessel."

"Let's go aboard," said Tom.

"I'd rather see the Esquimaux again. I want to know more about them," said Arthur.

"Then I'll tell you what," said Captain Morris. "I'm pretty well known hereabouts where fishin' is going on. We'll give a party—a smoke party and drinks—and some of the men will tell you as much about the Huskies as you'll want to know. Now, shall we go aboard?"

The lads consented. Angus remaining behind, Captain Morris accompanied the others and saluted the commander of the fishing craft with a loud, "What cheer, Joel?"

"What cheer, old sarpint?" was the pleasing retort. "Why, you ancient sea-snake, whar have you rose from?"

"Under water, o' course, Joel. Can we come aboard?"

"Ye can—what fur?"

"To see you and yer fishin' tackles."

"Come alongside. Servant, gentlemen. From Canady, say?"

"No, England," replied Cecil.

"Never!" replied the fisherman. "Why, what in creation brought ye from England here? Not curiosity? Trade, maybe? Sealin'?"

"No; a little business," said George. "We are on a tour."

"That beats!" was the comment. "Well, since ye are here, I'll show you. There's my nets," he said, pointing to the seines hung in the rigging; "my boat is out after caplin."

"Who's he—or it?" inquired Tom.

"It's fish. Bait we call it; cod's fond of caplin, which is like a smelt, ye know, with a green back."

"Like U. S. currency," suggested Tom. "Greenbacks."

"Precisely; only he is silvered on the other side, which the greenbacks isn't. Smart you are, youngster! When the bait is got we light our fires, as you will see, and have our supper. Then off to the grounds in the morning; clean our fish—"

"That must take time," said Arthur.

"Well, not so much," replied the fisherman. "Ye see we've headers, cut-throats, and splitters. This is the way of it. The 'cut-throat' comes first. He hands the fish to the 'header,' who extracts sound, liver, and tongue. The 'splitter' takes out the back-bone and refuse, and sends the clean fish to the 'salter,' who packs them in layers. After being dried and sweated the cod are ready for stowage. There is your salt cod."

"Then are those huts used, sir; for there are women at work there?" said Cecil.

"Yes; women does a lot. They get a bit oily, o' course, but wear protectin' dresses. One woman can split say seven, aye, eight thousand cod a day, and ye can't count the heads she may strike if she goes for heading instead—fifteen thousand very like."

"Thank you," said Cecil. "We are quite satisfied. The operations are not very nice, I daresay."

"No; it ain't eau-de-Cologne nor lavender water, and cod-oil isn't the nicest flavour. But it's wholesome, I daresay."

"Good-day, captain. But would you like to come aboard our craft with one or two other friends and have a drop of whisky?" suggested Captain Morris, the "sea-snake."

"I will, by Jehoshaphat," replied the fisherman with much energy. "I've a friend ashore, a Hudson's Bay man, he is—I'll bring him. Jonas is a good one."

"Bring him by all means," said Cecil. "He will amuse us."

"He *will*," said Joel. "I tell you he amuses me. He tells what *he* calls the 'naked truth' about these places, and his own adventures, until I b'lieve I must ask him to put some clothing on his veracity. It's too naked for me. I can't understand it. It's *too* true."

George laughed and said, "He draws the long bow a bit then?"

"Draws twenty 'long bows,' the longest you ever see. He's a born archer in that way, is Jonas Tubbs. If you get him on trappin', look out."

"Oh, tell him to come, *please*," cried Tom. "I do love a good story. Can he speak Husky?"

"Sometimes he is very husky after a little bit of supper," replied Joel with a wink. "But you mean the Esquimaux language?"

"Yes," replied Tom. "We have a Husky on board, and he might help us to find out something about them."

"Jonas will tell you as much as you want. He'll come. So 'll I, soon's we can. So 'Tarva-tarva,' that's good-bye in Esquimaux."

"Tarva-tarva!" said the boys laughing, and Bob said, "Topsy-turvy!"

"What is good-day?" asked Tom.

"Oks-shi-ni" replied the fishing man; "and if you

want to make your Husky very talkative ask him if he will have 'oogligooliuk.'

"That sounds like drinking—a gurgle in the throat," said George.

"Right!" remarked the captain. "It's 'whisky.' Now, *au revoir*, mates, 'tarva-tarva.'"

Repeating the words, and laughing together, the young and merry party returned to the *Annie* in high spirits. Tom's first remark to the native was as follows:—

"Hullo, Husky, old fellow. Oks-shi-ni, oogligooliuk!"

"Abb, abb!" replied the native; although Tom's salutation sounded like "hooks and eyes," he quite understood the gurgling sound of the latter word. Then, greatly to the astonishment of the whole of the English party, Mickee, the Esquimaux, remarked confidentially, and with many nods to emphasize the rather misapplied sentiments, "God save the Queen! Confound *her* politics! Amen!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

A STRANGER—A CLUE TO THE TALISMAN—THE TRAPPER—"THE SPECTRE WOODMAN"—MISCHIEF BREWING.



THE astonishment of the party had scarcely subsided when Captain Morris was hailed as "Sea-sarpint," and went to welcome the new-comers. Meantime Angus took the Esquimaux aside and endeavoured to question him concerning Invucktoke and Captain Wood, but without much success. The native had lived near Rigolette some years, and had an old relative whose name was also "Mickee." So far Angus had ascertained when he was disturbed by Joel and Jonas Tubbs, who grasped his hand.

"Proud to meet you, sir," said Jonas. "A British officer is a welcome star in our horizon. How's the old country, sir?"

"Quite well, I believe," replied Angus, looking at the man. "You are an old stager here, I fancy?"

"Yes, sir, for nigh twenty years I've been a Company's man, and in all that time I've only once visited Europe. I went home in '52, and here I'll remain I expect for ever."

"I wonder if you were much down Esquimaux Bay direction?"

"Oh, yes, I've trailed all across Labrador. I've

wintered at Ungava yonder. I'm bound for the Bay soon, and then I'll track across the mountains before winter to the Grand Fall, and so on west."

"Is it possible that you ever heard anything of a Captain John Wood, an Arctic sailor, and in some way mixed up with the Company's business in 1848 or thereabouts?"

"Wood! Let me see. John Wood! There was a Wood at Rigolette in 1863 or thereabouts, a fine sailor, like—well, it's a queer comparison, but something an old likeness to young master yonder."

Angus turned and found Arthur standing just behind him.

"My goodness, can you remember him? That's the son of the man I mean."

"Remember him! Certain I *do*. He saved my life, and I drew his likeness after when he was asleep one night, and didn't know. I wasn't likely to forget "Jack Timber," as we sometimes called him—a regular heart of oak was he."

"That's the man," cried Angus. "Cecil, Tom, Bob, we have found the clue; most wonderfully has it come, Mr. Tubbs."

"Never mind the mister," replied the factor. "Tubbs will do; it's short if it ain't sweet. Bless my heart, lad, I can see your father in you—dear, dear! How long ago is it? Sixteen year nearly since, by 'accident' I called it—I don't know—Jack Timber came along in his cruising ship, and we had a little expedition together over the trail."

"Tell us all about it," said Arthur. "Let us hear. I am quite anxious, Cecil."

"No wonder, sir. Dear me! I can't well remember the year, years go so fast, and my memory isn't so good as it might be. It must be about eighteen, or may be sixteen years ago," continued the man. "How old are you, lad?"

"Sixteen," was the reply.

"Ah, well, it don't matter. Old Jack Timber, as we called him, came along with me up by Rigolette—up the big river, and we made an agreement, though I've never kept it."

"He's off now," whispered Joel the fisherman to Morris, his friend the "sarpint," "he's off. Your lieutenant will hear more of Labrador now than he is ever likely to hear again."

"Do you mean to say he is romancing?" asked Captain Morris.

"I believe so; he's told me many a tale, and if only one quarter of them is true I should feel kind o' trustful for the rest. But when you come to such things as *he* saw, or *says* he saw, why, give me the Book of Aninias, with illustrations by his wife Sapphira."

"But if he's hoaxing us—I mean Mr. Fowler—"

"Let him alone. He hasn't came to the 'naked truth' yet. When he does I'll interfere. He *has* lived in the Company's territory for years—that's true anyway—he may have known your friend's friend. Listen."

"Yes," the factor was saying, "me and another went up the river and crossed the peninsula—your friend didn't. He remained at Rigolette, and—"

"Did you—excuse me interrupting—did you ever hear of any buried treasure, anything hidden in the woods there, 'cached,' you know?"

"Many a time. Oceans of money. It's not true."

"Think not?"

"Certainly not. Are you bound on that trail?"

"We are. Captain Wood left a treasure behind him up the Hamilton River somewhere. The spot is clearly indicated, and indeed one landmark is mentioned, 'The Clerk!'"

"The Clerk!" exclaimed the Company's man. "Why, I know it well. It's up the Narrows near North-west

River. It's supposed to be like a man writing. I know the Clerk, sure!"

"Do you really now, Jonas?" interposed Captain Joel. "Don't you go and illustrate your experiences. This is business."

"I'm not illustrating," retorted the trapper, as we may call him. "I declare to you it's the na—"

"Not the truth, not the 'naked truth,' Jonas, don't say that. I can't believe ye."

"Well, it's true, 'tis indeed. I have scattered a bit, sir," he added apologetically to Angus. "I have at times thrown off a few anecdotes which may have not borne the test of experience; but now, with the son of old Jack Wood looking at me, I'm fair and square."

"Will you come and guide us?" asked Cecil.

"I will," replied the man heartily; "there's my hand on it. I will go. When do you sail?"

"As soon as we can," replied Angus. "George, this is very curious."

"It is indeed," said George. "I say, Mr. Tubbs, do you know Mickee?"

"An Esquimaux. I did once. He was the biggest thief in the district. He was there when 'Jack Timber' was."

"Do you see that Husky yonder?"

"Aye, he may be an Invucktoke specimen."

"He is, and his name is 'Mickee.'"

"Likely enough. There are plenty. They pick up a few words of English and go up with fishing vessels. Sometimes as pilots. I have been piloted into Ungava Bay by a Husky."

"Will you come down-stairs and see the papers, or perhaps take a little refreshment?" suggested Cecil.

"Thank you," replied Captain Joel, replying for himself and his friend. "I think we will. I am rather sandy in the mouth."

"By all means," assented the Company's agent, "and we'll have a conversation, gentlemen."

The whole party adjourned to the cabin, where various tinned meats and some bottles were hospitably produced. The agent seemed pleased.

"Ah!" he said, "this meat is not to be despised either. Many a time in the old days I would have been glad of such a bit and sup. Raw seal, which has got bad by keeping, is not to my taste much."

"You have lived among the Esquimaux, I suppose?" said Arthur. "What race are they?"

"Same as Laplanders and Greenlanders. They are a distinct people who have migrated. I have heard of some who crossed Hudson's Strait to Ungava on a raft."

"Really!" exclaimed the captain.

"Really and truly. They spread somehow, and are a queer people. Their heaven is under water; those who have been good go under where whales are numerous, and feast on blubber. The bad men and women go where seals, &c., are scarce or only obtained with great trouble. They never bury their dead. They never sleep in their clothes; and they never wash, so the crust is a protection against the mosquitoes, which we cannot avoid."

"Yes, they *are* a nuisance," assented Tom. "We shall have plenty lower down."

"You have enough here on land. Inland they are dreadful. There are three kinds of biting animals: the mosquito, the black fly, and the gnat. From daylight to about nine the 'skeeters' last, then the flies till sunset, and then the midges or gnats. I remember being lost in the woods once, and a nice time I had with mosquitoes."

"Is it a story?" asked Tom innocently.

"No, it's quite true," replied the trapper warmly.

"I mean—I beg your pardon—I meant is it an adventure?"

"It was rather a serious adventure for me, and it

may be a warning to you young men not to go about these places alone. You may so easy get lost. This was the way of it:

"Hum!" muttered Joel. "Is this your own experience, mister?" he asked. "I think I'll clear out."

Tubbs made no answer, but after a reiterated demand from Tom, who noted the tale down, the interesting Company's agent began the adventure as follows:—

THE SPECTRE WOODMAN.

"I had to cross a few miles—about a day's journey—to one of our establishments. We had been travelling, but as the last stage was short and the night moonlit, I determined to cross the belt. So I set off after some supper, and felt not a bit afraid, for I knew when I gained the hills I could easily track the trail. I had been living in the neighbourhood, I must tell you, for some time, and was pretty well acquainted with the paths.

"I mounted the rising ground and pushed on. Finding a path, evidently a well-trodden one, I followed it, and found myself after a while by a stream, a circumstance that surprised me, for I had never seen that stream before, and may possibly never see it again—"

"Most likely not," muttered Captain Joel sceptically.

"Don't interrupt, please," continued the trapper. "The moonlight broke through the branches of the trees as I proceeded, but I had not gone far when I perceived an enormous man flitting on just ahead of me. Sometimes the figure halted on a trunk for a second, but as I approached the gigantic form sprang aside and appeared further on. The weather turned suddenly cold, then suddenly hot for a spell. The night was calm, and still going north along the path, the figure led me, till suddenly in a darker glade he vanished suddenly.

"I paused and looked around me. The moon was sailing high in the heavens; not a sound was heard except the rippling and murmuring of the water. I felt rather lost, I can tell you, and I bravely turned back to where I had noticed a 'portage' path. I had much trouble; the way seemed longer than before. I had lost my direction, completely carried away by the figure, which had led me wrong, as I fancied. Many times I remembered the spectre woodman, and concluded he had appeared to me as he had to others, and that I was doomed!

"Such feelings, you will say, were unpleasant," continued the narrator, "and I resolutely turned back in the track. I reached the portage when day broke, and finding an old canoe which belonged to the post, I determined to cross the stream.

"No sooner said than done. I paddled over and started forward to find the path, which lay, I knew, close to the upper end of the portage. But I could not find it; and then I discovered that I could not even find my way back to the river. As the weather was dry and hot there were no pools or places whereat I could drink. The sun rose high and became obscured by heavy clouds. A storm was approaching. The country changed to a swamp, flies and mosquitoes tormented me fearfully. I lay down and almost gave myself up for lost, when I heard a sound—an echo—of a gun.

"It was getting towards evening, so I rose up and hurried in the direction of the sound. Again and again I heard it, until, having traversed some couple of miles, I distinguished the sound was thunder, short and sharp. The lightning flashed and the thunder pealed for more than an hour. I was nearly struck, and quite soaked during the tempest, and finally went to sleep utterly bewildered and weary, caring little what might happen.

"Early in the morning I was awakened by a cold

touch, and I opened my eyes. To my horror and astonishment a bear, an enormous brown bear, stood beside me sniffing. If I moved I knew he would hug me to death, so I summoned all my courage and resolution to remain as quiet as possible. Bruin sniffed and sniffed, then he half dragged, half carried me down to his lair, where he covered me with branches and leaves. There I remained for some time quite motionless, for I knew if I stirred he would at once, if within range, attack me.

"Some time passed, and then after a careful glance around I ventured to sit up and push aside the branches. Nothing was to be seen, so I rose and hurried away, careless whither I went. Down the hill I rushed as hard as I could, and at length perceived smoke. I heard a gun—a real gun—none of heaven's artillery this time. I tried to shout; I could not. Still I ran on, and in five minutes rushed into the arms of my own men not a hundred yards from my own house. I was safe!

"It seems all day I had been following my own tracks in a circle and bearing round the compass. The bear had carried me out of the beaten path—my own track—and so saved me. There, that's true!"

"Very wonderful!" said Tom. "But what about the Phantom Woodman?"

"I discovered the cause of it," replied the narrator. "The moon was full and bright *behind* me, and that spectre was my own shadow which I had been following!"

A hearty laugh followed the trapper's tale. Tom thanked him as well as the others, and requested leave to write the adventure down. The man graciously permitted the insertion of the story in the diary, and soon after the party broke up. Captain Joel had disappeared before that.

"Come to-morrow; sail with us," said Angus. "We

will make it worth your while. We will only put in at Hopedale, and carry you thence direct to Esquimaux Bay."

"I will go," said the man. "But keep an eye on Mickee. He's a thief and the son of a thief. If your uncle trusted to him you won't find the treasure easily. Have you any information as to what was buried there?"

"No; but in a sealed packet, which is only to be opened at the place, I daresay we shall find a full inventory of all the buried treasure. Hollo! who is that?"

"Nothing," said Arthur. "I didn't hear anything."

"I did," said the trapper. "Somebody moved. Well, the landmarks are the Clerk, you say."

"Yes, bearing west. There are three toupies on the shore, and on the last island—a bare, rocky island—is the treasure," said Cecil.

"Indeed!" said the trapper. "We shall find it easily; a child could find it with such directions. The last island? There are about sixty of them—is a plain hint. Well, good-night. Good-night, captain!"

"Good-night!" cried all the lads. "We will sail to-morrow. You will come?"

"Certainly. Best come up close inshore, and you'll see the bait catching."

"Go inshore! not much," muttered Captain Morris. "No wish to *go ashore*, my lad, when the tide falls. That trapper is *too kind*. The wind is fair, and we could run down well to-night."

"But we *must* wait, captain; I promised," said Angus.

"Well, I hope he'll turn up and not keep us waitin'. I kind o' distrust him myself," said Morris.

"So do I," said George. "It's as well we didn't tell him the whole secret, Angus."

"I didn't, on purpose," said the lieutenant. "Now, boys, bed. Where's Cecil?"

"Gone to bed already, I think," said Tom. "He went to the cabin not long ago. Good-night!"

"I'll turn in," said Angus. "The packet and the maps of the 'cache' must be put away."

"I rather wish you had not showed them to the men," said George. "They may tell tales."

"They cannot do anything without the sealed packet," said Angus. "That, I am sure, contains the memoranda, and is not to be opened till we reach Esquimaux Bay. So do not be alarmed. We will arrange matters in the morning with Mr. Tubbs."

So saying, Angus retired to rest, and in a short time the whole ship's company except the wakeful watch were asleep.

Numerous vessels and more numerous boats put out early. Amongst the former was Captain Joel's craft, and it glided swiftly past the *Annie* on the larboard tack, then when the open water was gained all sail was hoisted and the handy vessel flew down the wind with a flowing sheet.

So the watch reported in the morning to Captain Morris, who stamped his foot on deck, said two big words, and immediately sought Angus in the cabin. "Mischief!" he muttered.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A DISCOVERY—CECIL SELF-ACCUSED—A CHASE—
ARTHUR AND THE PLOVER—AN ADVENTURE.



MISCHIEF indeed! The captain's brow was clouded as he strode hastily into the cabin and aroused Angus. The noise he made, purposely, no doubt, soon disturbed the rest of the young men, and each individual in turn sat up, yawned, inquired the time, extended his arms, rubbed his eyes, yawned again, and finally lay down again, but wide awake and intent upon the captain.

"What's up?" inquired Tom flippantly.

"You ought to be," retorted the captain, who appeared rather out of temper. "Mr Fowler, I have news for you. That fishing schooner, the *Gannet*, is off!"

"Off where?" said Angus with little interest. "I don't see how it concerns us much, captain. Let her go."

"She has gone south," said the captain—"to Nain, perhaps."

"She may go to Jericho for all I care," was the somewhat sleepy answer.

"Perhaps to Hopedale, surely to Esquimaux Bay," persisted the skipper. "Moreover," he continued, ignoring Angus' impatience, "the Company's late agent has gone with Captain Joel, and they have enticed away Mickee the Esquimaux!"

George now perceived that the captain had some grave suspicions, and he said:

"Captain Morris, you suspect the men have played us a trick. It is as well they do not know all our landmarks."

Angus jumped out of bed as quickly as "old Mrs. Slipperslopper" did when the fox had stolen the "gray goose" of nursery legend, and hurried into the saloon.

The papers concerning the Talisman had been abstracted!

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish!" exclaimed George, when Angus, *deshabillé*, came running back, wearing little else but a scared expression which one did not usually see upon the brave young man's face.

"The papers have been stolen. That captain and the humbugging agent have robbed us! That story was an invention to keep our attention diverted. The captain was not present. I remember he went away while the adventure was being told. Fortunately none of us let out about the island, and they will have to search for a time—we can overtake them. Why, Cecil!"

Angus suddenly ceased speaking, for Cecil's usually cheerful face wore an expression of dismay and humiliation much deeper than the mere loss of the papers would account for.

"My dear Cecil, you look alarmed; what is it? We shall catch the fellows, you may depend."

"Yes, but—but—Angus, I have been a fool," burst out Cecil impulsively.

"My dear Cecil, gently. What have you done? I am quite sure you had nothing to do with the abstraction of the papers."

"No, of course not. But I—I—told the Company's agent about the island, and he will know where to look," Cecil hesitatingly explained.

A silence fell upon all. Cecil had told these un-

scrupulous men where to put their hands upon an invaluable treasure—a talisman, as the boys hoped, which would ensure their happiness—a treasure on which Cecil's sister's happiness mainly depended. This great amulet or other valuable legacy was now in a fair, or rather unfair, way to be filched from them!

"I wish we had never gone on board that beastly fishing schooner."

"Nor seen Joel. I'll *Sea-sarpint* him," muttered the captain with a nod which spoke volumes for the severity of the novel punishment he expressed as "sea-sarpenting." "I'll give him snakes," he added vehemently.

The countenance of the captain, as he enunciated his intention to bestow such a gift, valuable no doubt in view of the scarcity of those reptiles, nearly made Bob laugh. Fortunately he checked himself, or he might have earned a viper or two.

"I'll spit him on his own bowsprit," continued the captain, who was extremely angry at being outwitted. "I'll lash him to the main shrouds and flog him. I'll make him eat the binnacle, I will, and wash it down with bilge water. He shall have a pleasant day with me for outragin' my ship. The—the—skunk!" finished the agitated skipper.

While Captain Morris was intent upon this condign punishment, which would require to be reversed in its application if it was to be effective, the boys had tumbled up and were dressing rapidly. Cecil said nothing, but no one upbraided him. He dressed in silence, and felt greatly ashamed.

"Come, old fellow," said George, when Cecil appeared on deck—the schooner was quickly under way again—"come, don't give way; accidents will happen, Cecil. You were a little too frank this time. But we will catch these thieves, and they shall be punished."

"They have had hours' start," muttered Cecil, grasp-

ing George's sympathetic hand—"hours, and with this wind must have got well away. If the breeze drops!"

"Never anticipate evils. Suppose it does not drop. It's steady now. Angus is sorry, but he says the matter can't be helped. You will hear nothing more of it, I promise you."

"Yes; thanks, George, but shall I not think of it? Shall I not feel all my life that I have deprived you all—and Annie—dear old Annie, too—of something valuable and precious? George, I am ashamed of myself thoroughly!"

"Well, it *was* stupid. But remember we have still a sealed packet which was not in the locker. So never say die. That wretched Husky shall be hanged, if I can do it. He is a regular bad one. I almost wish we had left him on the ice—to freeze!"

"Oh, George! Well, I can't mend matters by worrying," said Cecil, with an attempt at cheerfulness. "Here are the others. I say, Angus, I am dreadfully sorry. Tom, Bob, Arthur, will you *ever* forgive me?"

"We all forgive you, dear old fellow. There is no harm done. You are too sensitive, Cecil," said Angus, who knew a few kind words would do more to calm his friend than any amount of demonstration. "It will all come right. Cheer up!"

"I've loaded our little gun yonder," said the captain, who came up at this juncture; "and I just tell you, sir, that when that blessed *Gannet* comes within range I'll give her pepper!"

"We cannot fire upon the schooner!" said Tom, aghast.

"Can't we? I *will*, anyway. What! is a fellow like Joel to come and insult our country and the old country, to eat and drink like a free-luncher, then collar your papers, and not get shot at? Jehoshaphat!"

"We are stepping nicely through the water, but the

chase has quite disappeared. She must have sailed early," said Cecil.

"Ay, ay; but we'll overhaul her—if the wind holds."

That was the problem. Would the wind hold? If not, the treasure would be abstracted and made away with before the *Annie* could possibly get down to Esquimaux Bay.

The little vessel ran merrily along, plunging into the "crisp" breaking waves and showering spray over her figure-head. But by degrees the wind fell; the rushing was growing less and less; then suddenly the breeze blew again, more from the north this time, which rendered warm clothing agreeable, though not long before the thermometer was at 85° in the shade, owing partly to the reflection of the sun's rays from the rocks. It is a curious fact that in these parts storms always bring the coldest weather; in the interior the greatest cold is during a perfect calm. At Ungava and round there this, we know, is the case, where extremes of cold and heat are observed following in quick succession.

The north wind was unpleasant, and the captain began to fear that it would back to the east and so impede the schooner. Island after island was passed, league after league gained. As each island was approached the numerous birds were objects of craving to the young sportsmen. But no landing was permitted on these submerged mountains—as the islets seem to be—like alps rising from the water, one side being nearly always higher than the other, and averaging three hundred feet, or thereabouts, in elevation. Some islands are cleft nearly in twain, some with saw-toothed cliffs; some full of chasms, in which the boiling, thundering sea swirls and rushes in eddies, rising up the sides, and retiring to let the dripping rocks be seen again. Such islands guard the desolate coast and shelter millions of sea-birds.

The day and the night passed. Summer was wearing away unperceived, August was near, and October meant winter. But the vessel made her way slowly along, baffled by opposing winds and currents, slapped by rude waves and threatened by rugged rocks, mocked by a calm which brought the sun out in fierce splendour, and gave the *Annie* a taste of the Tropics on the threshold of the Arctic region.

It was during that two days' calm that another bird-catching expedition was organized and carried out with much fun and some little adventure, particularly with a bird which in a very amusing way led Arthur a dance about the cliffs. The tale was told by Tom, who made the entry in his diary, from which the chief incidents of this story are taken. A particular island attracted the young sportsman's attention, for there were congregated so many birds that the cliffs seemed white or black according as their breasts or backs were viewed *en masse*.

"To shoot them," said Tom, "was quite impossible. I assure you, captain, the things came flying *at* us, and at other times passed so close as to alarm us. We fired repeatedly, but never killed a single bird."

"Perhaps they were all married birds," suggested the captain.

"Most like they are," Tom continued. "Arthur made up his massive mind to kill one bird; he pointed it out to me. You did, Arthur, so don't deny it. Like Mr. Tupman, he 'singled out that particular bird,' which was sitting grinning at him from the cliff just within range. It was a kind of plover, you know, and Arthur wanted it badly. So he took deliberate aim, and, after what appeared to me half an hour, he fired. The plover disappeared. I thought Arthur had quite blown him away; but we hurried forward, and just inside the edge of the cliff above us we perceived him, wounded. He had struggled up, and there he lay.

"'Come along,' said Arthur; 'we must fetch him down. I'll have that plover.'

"It was an awfully difficult climb. There is a kind of recess-place; and when you gain that you have to leap across a narrow chasm about three feet wide and a hundred feet deep to the water—a ragged chasm with toothpicks all stuck in it and looking 'porcupiny.' We both managed this and actually succeeded in scaling the cliff opposite, which was no great fun, as it was steep. We had to work along a sloping shelf slantwise, holding on like grim death until we gripped the top of the cliff, when we were of course some yards from the wounded bird.

"Arthur rushed forward to pick him up, but the bird hobbled away beautifully. Arthur ran on, so did the bird, and I roared with laughter. The plover was up to every move; he waited until Artie had his hand outstretched to catch him, then off he *limped*—he never flew much, but limped on legs and wings, till Arthur grew so angry that he loaded his gun and let fly at the poor wounded plover."

"Poor wounded plover, indeed!" interjaculated Arthur—"likely wounded!"

"Do not interrupt the narrative, Arthur. This is a true tale, gentlemen, and worthy of all credit. Arthur shot at the bird again, and *again killed it!* Down it fell; away went Arthur without waiting to load; and, just as he approached it, it rose up and flew away to another place altogether, where it was impossible to follow it. You should have seen Arthur's face when the plover cut away, with its toes to its beak extended in derision at the sportsman. I never saw a fellow so dumfounded in my life. The plover screamed with laughter, and I am not quite certain it did not say something rude. It put its claw to its nose distinctly."

"Oh, Tom, Tom!" said Angus; "you are too bad. So you did not get your plover, Arthur?"

"No, the little beast escaped. It was rather a sell, for I was regularly taken in by it," replied Arthur. "We have brought back some specimens, though; and Cecil, I see, has found a fox."

"Yes; he seemed half-starved, but his fur is all right. It's a blue fox. I promised Annie one. I say, captain, sha'n't we put into Hopedale for letters?"

"Yes," replied the captain, "when we can find a breeze. We may have a little of it before to-morrow. The gun is still loaded, and we'll keep a sharp look-out for the *Gannet*. I should like to blow him away. He won't escape as that plover did, I will promise you, Mr. Tom."


"I hope not," replied Bob. "He deserves a peppering and assaulting too."

"Bob, remember your promise," said Cecil. "Puns are *taboo*."

"It's not my fault," shrieked Bob as he disappeared headlong down the cabin stairs. Nor did he venture up again until the righteous wrath of the other members of the party had subsided.

CHAPTER XXV.

HOPEDALE—THE SHIP FROM EUROPE—LETTERS FROM HOME—DOWN THE COAST—ESQUIMAUX BAY—UP THE RIVER—A TIGHT PLACE.

“ OPEDALE—at last!” said the captain cheerfully.

“Where is it, captain?” inquired George with a touch of irony—“on land or at sea? It’s all Hope, so far, with me.”

“Where’s Hopedale!—why, before your eyes,” said the skipper.

George looked at Angus, then at all the others, looked at the sky, and the deck, gazed in the calm face of the captain, and said:

“Well, then, I’m blind—I can’t see it! You don’t mean that toy-house arrangement?”

“Yes, I do; that’s Hopedale village,” said the captain.

“Yon *mean* village!” said George with strong sarcastic emphasis. “Not a city or a town!—I should say city myself, I think! There’s a church or chapel—a red house; some labourers’ pig-sties, gone to ruin apparently; and some things in the distance like dust-heaps—certainly a city!”

“Anyway it’s Hopedale. The red house is the mission-house, the chapel you can see. The pig-sties are Esquimaux huts, and the heaps of rubbish toupies. That’s what’s the matter.”

"It's rather a limited company," said Tom. "But as this is Hopedale, let us land and inquire at the post-office for letters."

"Inquire where?" asked the captain.

"At the post-office," repeated Tom. "Surely the place has a post-office?"

"Scarcely," replied the captain. "Why, the ship comes only once a year from Europe. There are plenty of fishing vessels in the season. But once a year the American supply ship comes with relief for the missionaries—a wife, perhaps, or an intended bride—a sister, it may be. Good news and bad news comes, like Christmas, once a year, and seldom at any other time than at the end of July or the beginning of August."

The young people were silent. The captain had unwittingly touched a chord in each heart. What news had the mission vessel brought them? Hopes and fears chased each other through all hearts. Even Angus was anxious. The moment which had been so long anticipated, the charm which in anticipation had seemed so alluring, now was but a dull sensation of fear of the unknown, a very present trouble of mind.

"'Tis ever thus," says the Irish poet, as he proceeds to show us how "from childhood's hour" we see our "fondest hopes decay." The long-wished-for meeting, the expected welcome, the loving greeting, which we have been counting upon and picturing to ourselves—the pleasant party, the merry picnic, the fête, and what not—all these are so often marred by coldness of friends, the change from regard to indifference, notwithstanding all promises and assurance. Weather cannot damp us more than do such *contretemps*. The golden bowl is broken, the silver cord of friendship or enjoyment is loosed by a whim, or a studied coldness, and the sky is dark all around our mental horizon. "'Tis ever thus!"

So the long-reckoned-on arrival at Hopedale, when letters would be received, and all would be bright and happy, fell flat! There was the German vessel; there was the mission-house, and yet the boys hesitated to board the one or inquire at the other for letters from home! Angus and George both felt the strange fear begotten of affection and uncertainty, and the sailor said:

"Arthur, Cecil, will you two go for the letters?"

"I'll go," said the captain, who saw there was something amiss. "Come with me, Master Bob."

Bob assented. Then Arthur volunteered, "I think we are a pack of geese," he said—"a regular pack of geese. Don't let us worry!"

"Flock," suggested Bob. "*Pack* of hounds, you know; pack ice—"

"Pack off," cried the captain with assumed authority. "Clear out, and let us go ashore, or call on the ship yonder first."

The lads descended, and were quickly pulled alongside the *Moravian*, and hailed her.

"Ship ahoy! any letters picked up for us?"

"Who are you?" inquired a voice in English, but with a foreign accent.

"Skipper of the *Annie* schooner down from the coast. Letters from England, any?"

"Ya, ya," replied the German. "Vaits!"

He disappeared, and returned accompanied by a very gentlemanly man who proved to be the captain.

"Here are your letters," he said in excellent English. "There is a whole sack of newspapers too. I will send them on board. Take the letters first."

He tossed a good-sized bag full of letters into the boat, and after a hearty shower of thanks from Arthur and Bob, to which the German responded by bowing and raising his cap, the boat was pulled back at full speed.

Many anxious faces crowded round the gangway, as the captain dragged the bag up.

"Here we are!" he cried. "Now, come here, all of you."

He proceeded to the cabin, followed by the young men and boys. The crew remained on deck until the captain should return. There were no letters for them in that bag. There might be some ashore left by some fishing vessel.

In a moment the string which tied the bag was cut, and the seals broken. A number of letters tumbled out, and a scramble ensued. There were plenty for all. Angus had the most and the longest. Annie had turned out quite a good correspondent. George had also a goodly number; and for each of the boys were loving missives—some from relatives, some from intimate friends inclosed in home letters. This was good, and the letters were eagerly opened. But the reading was better, the news best of all!

What a reading party they were! Angus in the corner with a pile of correspondence at his side, a letter, three sheets long, with a postscript nearly as long and much sweeter, in his grasp. George, sitting at the table calmly reading Nellie's affectionate messages to her "dear old man," as she called him, and still calls him. There were "loves" and messages each to each from Edith and the rest; "all at Pilton send love and kind wishes!" The dogs, the cat, the horses; the garden, the fruit, the weather, the gossip in Barnstaple, Fremington, and Instow; the condition of the cricket ground and the croquet club; the church, the river, the latest weddings and engagements; the sane, the sick, and the sorrowful—all were chronicled for the benefit of the wanderers, and every letter ended with, "Come back soon!"

Then the party read how every Sunday "All absent friends, God bless them!" was the toast honoured in hall

and kitchen. The boys read of hunting and hounds, of the change in the mastership of the stag-hounds, of the proposed alterations and projected railway, a boat-race and a launch near Appledore. So many things to tell, so much to hear, so many voices, so many dimmed eyes—eyes clouded with tears of happiness and thankfulness for all being so well at home!

Again there were inquiries for news. Had the treasure been found? would it be found? and if found what *would* it be? What *was* it? Was it money or jewels, or nothing at all? These inquiries gave rise to much speculation and conversation afterwards. But that afternoon no one talked for long. Letters were exchanged, all except Angus's and George's, for the correspondence of sweethearts and wives is sacred.

So the afternoon passed, and when the captain came to suggest dinner, the young explorers were quite surprised. At dinner the captain, with many winks and nods, produced three bottles of champagne, and the whole party toasted "Absent friends" with three times three cheers. The evening was passed in perfect happiness, mingled with some home sickness, now epidemic for the first time.

"Let us get along," said Arthur. "We'll sail at once, I suppose?"

"May as well have a look at Hopedale," said the captain. "The wind is light, and not very favourable. We *could* tack down, but the currents will drift us about. Wait till the wind chops, and then I'll scuttle away!"

So next day a little invasion of Hopedale was planned, and the first house in the place close to the shore is the mission-house. It is slightly elevated, and commands a pretty view up the bay. The scenery is peculiar; the ground scarcely level anywhere. Land and water are equally dotted with hills of gneiss, which on land rise to a respectable elevation; in the sea, of

course, they can be measured by thousands of fathoms, and, pushing up their heads, are termed *islands*. The bold hills inland are occasionally covered with moss and lichen; some are perfectly bare and gray. The huts near the mission were wretched hovels; in these the Christian Esquimaux lived, and perhaps still exist.

The mission-house was, when our boys visited it, surrounded by a fence and made gay with a small front garden. The party were admitted; a formal—not unfriendly—visit was paid; for English was limited, and conversation restricted. After the light refreshment offered had been partaken of, the visitors took leave and inspected the Esquimaux huts, and got well snarled at by the dogs. Then came chapel, and our young people all attended. The service is particularly simple, having no prayers, no sermon, but only hymns, which are sung by the assembled congregation. "There is a daily service at 5 P.M., and a Sunday service at 10 A.M.," says Tom's diary.

The Esquimaux having already been described, we need not enlarge upon the notes on the converts of Hopedale. They are dressed in more European fashion certainly, and some talk a little German. But to elevate the Esquimaux is a herculean task. Your Esquimaux will eat, drink, live, and go to church like a sheep, or a man in a dream. He will do as you tell him, and be perfectly *content*; never grumble, unless sorely provoked indeed. But he will remain an Esquimaux. In spite of all temptations to be trained by other nations, he's still an Esquimaux. He is the existing specimen of the pre-Adamite man, and will never be anything else.

The party from the *Annie* hurried on board in obedience to a signal of recall. The weather looked threatening; but, as no serious danger was apprehended, Captain Morris had determined to sail as soon as the wind permitted, provided it came not as a storm. "We

have all the Atlantic against us now, remember," said the skipper.

Up anchor and away. The strong wind came down from the Straits, and raised the already sufficiently rough sea. The Atlantic billows are never at rest up near Labrador. The great swell rises and falls with tremendous force. But the *Annie* darted rapidly along, a good look-out being kept for the *Gannet*. All down the coast to Cape Webuck, and then to the head-land, the western boundary of Esquimaux Bay, not a trace of the fishing vessel was visible. Many others were seen, many were hailed, but no information could be gathered.

"He has painted his name out," suggested the captain. "He must have been seen unless he has run out into the ocean, and is returning to the harbour from the north-east." In two days after leaving Hopedale, the *Annie* came in sight of Esquimaux Islands, which lie between Byron's Bay and the entrance to Hamilton Inlet or Esquimaux Bay.

A wondrous opening is this bay in the rocky wall which constitutes the Atlantic coast-line of Labrador. Thirty miles wide at the entrance, the inlet runs far into the interior until it contracts to a neck, only to swell out again like a rugged hour-glass. This neck is termed the "Narrows." But Tom's diary gives us some interesting particulars.

"Invuektoke or Sea Cow Bay," says our young scribe, "is about 250 miles beyond Belle Isle. We sailed up the wide channel to a place called Rigolette, where the river or inlet is very narrow, perhaps a little more than a mile in width. From the sea to Rigolette is fifty miles by the chart, and beyond Rigolette the inlet widens into a lovely expanse of water miles long; again it contracts and opens, and then the river begins. There are two wide openings, one on each side, and a great island is formed by the back-water on the east

side. Melville Lake is the big water after you pass the Narrows; and alongside, in the distance on the east, are the Mealy Mountains, a snow-topped range which runs with a curved line north-east to south-east away from the river. We found this out after."

It was a lovely morning when the *Annie* dropped anchor in the bay, inside George's Islands.

"Now," said Captain Morris, "you young gentlemen can do as you please. I'm a fixture—at least the schooner is. The tides here rush up just a little too much for me, and I'll not risk the run, or run the risk of beating up the Narrows. No ship can go up against the tides."

So it was arranged that a boat should be stored with provisions, arms, and ammunition. The captain was induced to go with the party, and preparations were made for the attack on the *Gannet* for the recovery of the Talisman.

The great Esquimaux Bay now has few of the original race resident on its shores. Small-pox and run and civilization generally, including marriages of dusky Husky women with white settlers, are the causes which have so greatly reduced the Esquimaux population. Perhaps some young reader may remember hearing how old Peter Cartwright, a trader some hundred years ago, brought some Esquimaux to England, where, alas! Caubvick the girl and her brothers and sisters caught small-pox. All died but Miss Caubvick, who returned quite well to Labrador, whence she had come. But unfortunately the seeds of infection still remained in the too seldom changed attire, and the tribe caught the disease. Hundreds died, and very few now remain. The piles of stones along the margin of the sea—the water beloved of the Esquimaux, his feeding place when alive, his paradise when dead—he will never quit the shore,—these stones now speak, and tell the tale of the vanishing Esquimaux!

But the young people did not moralize on the disappearance of pre-Adamite man. They were all on deck enjoying the wooded outlines of the hills and rocks, and dimly distant mountains wrapped in the "purple atmosphere." The cliffs and islands are more or less wooded, generally less, for a close inspection shows that the soft outlines are due rather to distance than to vegetation, though grass grows amid the rocks. Islands of all shapes and sizes lie off the bay, and this fact renders the chances of shipwreck very great, for by night or in a fog the ship that strikes is lost, the water being deep, and sheer in its depth besides, close beside the rocks.

Wildness characterizes the scene at the entrance, but this ruggedness gives way by degrees as the upper waters are gained. On the left as you ascend is Mount Nat, a solitary and well-clothed hill, whereon disport the deer in dread of the mosquitoes, which are a nuisance in the summer equalling the Egyptian plague of flies. In the distance, some sixty odd miles away, stand forth the Mealy Mountains, with white caps of snowy fashion, above Rigolette.

These mountains rise a couple of miles from the water and elevate their wall-like sides, steep enough, and sticking up in queer confusion, "like thumb-stalls," Tom says, all scattered and thrown about, as if the demons of Rip Van Winkle's time had been playing a game with them. When lighted up at sunset they are beautiful in their ruggedness and quaint shapes against the pure unclouded sky.

As the expedition proceeds we shall find little pieces of description, so we need not farther describe the scenery. Tom has done his task well, and we cannot do better than refer to his diary for any information we require, concerning the voyage in the boat up to and beyond Rigolette, a good harbour about fifty miles up the inlet. . . .

No precaution was neglected. The captain saw the *Annie* was safely at anchor sheltered from the everlasting swell or the occasional storm. Andrews was in charge, and strict injunctions were given to the men as to discipline. Meantime a look-out for the *Gannet* was to be kept, and a rocket was to be sent up from Mount Nat if the boat was wanted. This signal would be seen some distance at night; but Angus did not think the "fireworks" would be of much use.

The boat was manned and ready. The captain steered, Angus and George at the oars first, for the tide would sweep the boat up quickly enough. Supplies for three days were put on board—other provisions could be obtained at Rigoletta. Pistols, cutlasses, and cartridges, with "shot-guns," were all stowed away. Pickaxes and spades were also carried. The sealed packet was safe in Angus' pocket, a compass was put in, and just as the tide began to flow the boat was hauled alongside the gangway.

The men crowded the rigging and the forecastle and gave three hearty cheers. Those in the boat responded. Tom sat next the captain, Arthur, Cecil, and Bob forward. Angus and George were ready, oars up in man-o'-war fashion. Bob wielded the boat-hook, and when the captain gave the word to shove off, the oars dipped together, and with a sweeping tide under them the last expedition in Labrador "in search of the Talisman" was commenced.

The progress up the inlet was very like a picnic, and much more exciting. New and strange incidents happened every minute, and the boys were in the highest spirits. Now a seal popped up, sometimes a grampus or other finny monster, even a whale would come rushing down and spouting. These gentlemen had to be avoided, and particularly when they came "steaming" up with the tide at a tremendous pace quite alarming to see. The varieties of these marine

inhabitants and the different birds kept everyone amused and interested.

As they proceeded the wind came chasing up in the flood, and sail was set. Then the long-boat showed what it could do in the way of sailing. Up went the mainsail on the gaff, and with a rush and a plunge the good boat tore along, running a race with a whale for some seconds.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried the boys. "This is quite as jolly as the Family Robinson, isn't it?"

It certainly was, and there was the trim little schooner ready to carry them home. There was no fear of being left on the inhospitable Labrador coast like so many Crusoes.

The time passed quickly indeed. The wind and tide "*cum velis et remis*" propelled the expedition at quite eight knots. The oarsmen pulled no more, they turned about and gazed upon the scenery; drank in the beautiful air, and thanked Heaven for giving them health and strength to enjoy it all.

"Here we are at the 'Narrows,'" said the captain as he perceived the hills closing in on the water, and the deep shadows leaving only a tiny track on the lake channel. The water was calmer because more sheltered, and the reflected outlines were plainly seen advanced far into the "Narrows," through which the boat would soon pass to Rigolette. The scene was rather appalling, for the tide rushes up through the neck with very considerable force, overrunning the current in the other direction, and making a sluice-like rapid, which to a small boat would mean very imminent danger.

Picture to yourselves, as the boys saw it, a narrow gorge about a mile in width. Each side of this narrow water-way is guarded by high cliffs wooded—clothed with spruce from head to heel, a garment of leaves a thousand feet in length, or height. The water beneath

these overhanging bluffs was violently agitated, and beyond for a long distance lay a beautiful perspective, which terminates in a bend of the stream, the gorge continuing onward farther and farther. Beyond lies the great Melville Lake, behind the boat was the ocean. "Twixt lake and ocean rushes a tide through this romantic gorge—a tide which makes both mariners and boatmen tremble.

When the party had gained the entrance to the Narrows the tide had slackened, but the wind still afforded assistance. The boat progressed well, and entered the rougher water in the channel.

"The tide will turn in a moment," said Angus, "and then, judging by the rush up, we shall have a tremendous sea to meet. Shall we wait?"

"I can manage her, if you young gentlemen will all pull. There is an eddy alongside the cliff, and with this wind and four oars we will get through well enough."

"I rather question the propriety of it," said George. "We are inexperienced in such rapids."

"You won't hurt," replied the captain. "We can't upset easily. It's rough and tumble, I grant you. However, we'll land if you like and camp until the tide turns to-morrow."

"Thank goodness the breeze keeps off the 'skeeters,'" said Cecil. "If the wind drops we shall be eaten alive."

"How far is Rigolette?" inquired Angus.

"I don't exactly know; about four miles or so, I think," replied the captain. "It's up an inlet of the stream to the westward, or the starboard side of the inlet."

"Let us go on," said Arthur, "I'm ready to row."

"So am I," said Cecil.

"Ditto, ditto," remarked Tom, "when I am wanted."

"Come astern, sir," said the captain. "Mr. Fowler,

will you pull stroke? Mr. Cecil, bow, please. Mr. Hamilton, No. 2; and Mr. Arthur, behind Mr. Fowler. The tide is pretty slack, fortunately. So, ready all; up with her!"

The sturdy boat was taut and trim; the rowers well together; the wind light, but dead aft, and rushing quicker through the gully. Already the turning tide was being lashed to foam; but the waves were slight, and the boat proceeded in safety.

But not for long. Danger was ahead. It was now too late to return.

CHAPTER XXVI.

UP THE RIVER—RIGOLETTE—THE VOYAGE UP—THE
SEARCH FOR THE "TALISMAN"—THE SEALED PACKET
—SUCCESS.



HE tide had begun to turn, and the position of the voyagers in the boat was not devoid of danger—very considerable danger. As on the Seine in France, the tide flows at times with tremendous strength in a "bore," many feet high, which, meeting the strong current between high banks, renders boat or even ship navigation at times impossible; so here, in Labrador, the same causes produce the same effects. The roar of the rushing river can be heard for a couple of miles, and our voyagers were unlucky enough to be caught in the "sluice."

In vain the captain kept the boat's head straight. Even he had not calculated upon the strength of the tide. "Back, back!" he cried; "let her go astern; back water into the eddy!" The lads backed with all their might, and the sail was lowered. Not a moment too soon! The waves leaped up and tossed the boat, big as it was, like a cork. "Hold on!—now, starboard side, pull all together. We will work into the eddy. Up with the sail, Master Tom!"

Tom and Bob rose, and up went the sail; the wind—which was rushing up the gully as into a funnel, for it always blows either right up or down stream, be-

cause the high banks direct it—aided them. The boat heeled over for a minute ere the wind had quite caught the canvas. It was "touch and go"—all sat clutching the gunwale hard; all faces were pale. The captain alone remained cool and apparently at his ease.

The boat slowly righted; the wind came to its assistance, and, wet through, with the boat half full of water, the voyagers reached the eddy at the side and were comparatively safe.

"My stars!" exclaimed the captain, "that's a nice little rapid, ain't it? We had a 'squeak' for it."

The others made no remark. They had scarcely recovered their composure yet. Even Angus was glad to recover his breath before he replied:

"Yes, captain, it's about the worst I've seen."

"We sha'n't mind the 'Shillies' after this, Tom," whispered Bob. "The old Taw is a puddle compared to this river."

Tom nodded. He was thinking how sad it would have been to have been drowned just on the threshold of success.

"We are pretty safe now, I suppose," said Cecil, addressing the captain, as they were all watching the great dark green water tossing its angry crests aloft, hissing and seething in its flight; and as they were gazing still a great black thing came down, rushing through the flood, dashing along at a fearful pace; ere they could cry out it had disappeared.

"A whale!" exclaimed George. "Well, it's just as well we are where we are."

"If we were not here, sir," said Captain Morris, "we should be underneath that whale. It's lucky we made the eddy."

It was awfully grand; but as the boat made progress, hugging the shore, the fears of the lads disappeared. After a most exciting hour, full of incident and with many dangers escaped, the smoother water was reached.

They rested and were thankful. A good meal of somewhat damaged stores restored them to their usual spirits.

After a good rest they arose from their couches of boards in the boat, which had been moored in a safe spot, and prepared to row up to Rigolette. The flowing tide soon came to their assistance; the wind was light; mosquitoes came out in myriads, biting and worrying in the early morning. The sun was up, and the little landing-place of Rigolette, with a "post" and a red flag wearing H. B. on it, told the travellers that the Hudson's Bay Company had an agent there.

"We shall hear something of our opponents here," said Angus.

The scene was lively. Esquimaux kyacks were darting about; several boats were drawn up, and some small vessels lay in the little harbour or by the pier, where the stores were landed. The air was charming—a balmy breeze tempered the heat, which was over 80° in the shade that day. The boys ran hither and thither, examining the stores of furs and oil and the various "ships." They watched the natives cutting up the seals into bits, which were thrown into tanks; but the smell soon drove the voyagers away. The whole scene was, nevertheless, picturesque—the store and its flag, the small cannon in front, the nets hanging out to dry, the natives at work, and the Europeans inspecting the baking, coopering, or fishing. Behind lie the low hills, overhead is the glorious sun, and the sparkling water in the cove glitters pleasantly in the light.

Curiously enough no information could be obtained concerning Captain Joel, the Company's man, or the Esquimaux who had stolen the papers.

"No," said the agent, Mr. H. C—. "No, they've not come up. Who did you say?—Josiah? What's he like?"

Angus described him.

"Oh *him!*" exclaimed the agent. "He's a nice sort of chap. We dismissed him for gross misconduct. Don't you have anything to do with him."

"We guessed as much," said the captain. "But he said he knew Captain Wood—John Wood."

"Very like. We all have heard of him. I didn't know him; many did, though. He was up here for a while. Oh dear, yes; lived here."

Then Angus, after extracting a promise from Mr. C—— that the information should be considered confidential, told the friendly agent what their object was.

"Treasure!" exclaimed the agent; "he had no treasure! Money isn't made up here. He had oil, and furs, and maybe a *little* cash, and a Bible—that's about what Jack Wood had *here*. He made plenty of money with his pelts after a while. But cash here! No."

"Are you certain?" said George.

"Well, of course I can't be certain. But I'm pretty sure you'll have a wild-geese chase."

"We have landmarks and indications in plenty. Those fellows robbed me of my papers, and may have already extracted the valuables from the *cache*."

"No one has been up here to my knowledge. Let's see—the 'Clerk' is about twelve miles below Nor'-west River. It's possible the men may have crept up there. I doubt it. Howsumdever, you can try. But won't ye remain a while?"

Time was too precious. The temptation to see an Esquimaux dance or ball was put aside till the main object of the expedition had been accomplished. So after a day's rest the party proceeded up the river, past Gull Island, into the Wide Lake, which extended as far as they could see around them. Hills on the right; the curious "Mealy" Mountains on the left near the shore, barren and snow-clad. The forms are indicative of some volcanic action and disruption, ending in

molten rock, which finally solidified into the Mealy Mountains, composed of granite syenite and syenitic schist.

At last the long-desired landmark became visible. A hill—an isolated peak—precipitous from the water is the "Clerk;" to the land side it slopes, and is supposed to be like a cloaked figure stooping to write. Here was the place—a number of islands are sprinkled in the water. To the last of these the boat made its way, and in silence the whole party landed. The spades were carried ashore. Preparations were made. Nearly in the centre of the small island was a raised rock, or perhaps a heap of rocks.

"That is the place," said the captain.

Tom and Bob were extremely anxious to run off and work away the stones with the crow-bar; but Angus stopped them. "Wait a moment," he said.

"From what I have heard, and judging by my own suspicions, I think it only right to tell you not to count too much on *any* treasure. We have come out as directed, but I am afraid we shall not gain much in the way of money—at least, not here. Mr. C—— is no doubt right. Traders do not accumulate riches (in cash) in Labrador. So, boys, all of you, do not be too sanguine. There may be nothing."

"Then why did the old gentleman send us all out?" said George.

"He didn't send you, George. You are a volunteer; and right glad we all are that you came. But the old man may have had some moral objects in view; and, remember, certain advantages *will* accrue to us when we return. Besides, I have here a sealed packet to be opened after our discovery is made. There is something in this, in every sense of the term, you may be certain."

"So I think," said Cecil. "I don't care. Go on, Angus. Let us turn up the cache and get home."

Arthur, Tom, and Bob felt injured. They had quite

looked forward to an adventure and were disappointed. Arthur, however, quickly cheered up, and instead of complaining, as most of those present anticipated, he laughed and said:

"Yes, let us turn up the cache. It is no use anticipating evils. Let us see what we can do, and *do it!*"

Angus and George exchanged glances, and the latter said:

"Did you hear the once-desponding Arthur say that? The Talisman has done good already."

"Yes," added Angus, "we have *all* learnt something by our expedition. John Wood was a sensible man; but we shall find no treasure."

"He says we *shall*—distinctly says so," remarked Cecil.

"We have found much treasure already," replied Angus. "Health and strength, self-denial, patience, contentment, readiness of resource. Are not these treasures? Tom has learnt carefulness. Bob has learnt to speak without punning—it itself an inestimable gain. Yes, Cecil, your uncle has made us find many treasures; and mine—Annie!"

Angus' remarks were interrupted by the lads, who had already turned over the cairn. They were energetically digging when the elders came up. "We have found nothing yet," remarked Tom; "but we *shall*."

For quite fifteen minutes the removal of the blocks was continued without success, and the workers felt damped as well as warm with their exertions. "Bother!" said Tom.

"Ain't there a something stickin' up yonder?" remarked the captain, who had been a silent observer. "Surely there is!"

He indicated a particular spot, and in a few minutes he himself succeeded in uplifting an old tin box, quite perfect and padlocked. It was about a foot long and ten inches deep.

"Hurrah!" cried the lads, "we have found the treasure!"

"I knew we should," added Cecil.

Angus was surprised, so was George; for they had both made up their minds that no such treasure existed.

"It's heavy too," said the captain. "Now, heave all—up she comes! There she is!"

The box lay on the ground; a sudden blow with a stone smashed the old padlock, and Angus raised the lid.

The treasure was unearthed at last. After so many weeks of adventure and trial the great TALISMAN was found. What was it?

Yes, what was it? Angus raised the lid, hardly expecting to find a great treasure, but prepared at any rate to discover something well worth the seeking. A volume of some kind lay wrapped up in the centre of the box; all around were papers and documents. These were carefully removed, and then the centre treasure, evidently the "Talisman" expected, was drawn forth.

The boys remained in hushed and half-terrified expectation while Angus undid the wrappings.

"What is it?" whispered Tom. "A jewel-box?"

"No, it's only a bundle of paper, I believe," said Bob. "It's a 'sell'."

Angus continued his task, and in a few minutes he had accomplished it. The brass bindings made Arthur exclaim, "A treasure casket! I knew it."

"Then you are wrong," said Angus and Cecil simultaneously. "IT IS AN OLD BIBLE!"

"A Bible! Only a Bible after all! So we have come out all this way to find an old brass-clamped Bible. Where is the treasure—the great Talisman which will do us all so much good?" exclaimed Tom. "This is a sell!"

"By no means," said Angus. "Where will you find a better treasure than the Bible, or one of which you

can make better use? I can quite see Mr. Wood's idea, indeed I have already guessed his motives, as George knows. I am by no means disappointed."

"Well, then, we are," said Bob. "I quite expected gold and silver plate, doubloons, and any amount of dollars. I wanted to find a Captain Kidd's treasure-box, and there is nothing, at least nothing we might not have had at home."

"It is disappointing," said Tom; "but we shall survive."

"We have had a most charming trip anyway," said Arthur cheerfully, "and I for one will never regret the little disappointment. Father was quite right to send us. It has done us no end of good, and I don't mind saying so."

"Bravo, Arthur!" said George. "You are a living example of the foresight of your kind father. We have found our treasure, and there may be more in these papers than you think. Besides, Angus has a sealed packet to open still."

"We had best open that now," said Angus. "We shall doubtless find some explanations in it."

"Fine old boss, your uncle," interjected Captain Morris. "He knew what you all wanted, and he saw his way to reading you a lesson, he did."

Angus opened the packet while the good captain was speaking, and when he had finished the lieutenant read as follows:—

"MY DEAR SONS, NEPHEWS, AND FRIENDS,

"These are the last words I shall address to you in this world, and when you read them you will be far away in a strange land, with possibly some feeling of disappointment in your hearts for not finding gold and jewels."

Here Angus paused and looked at Tom and Bob, who blushed through their sea-bronzed faces, but said nothing. Angus continued to read:

"But if you have carried out my wishes and instruc-

tions in the spirit in which I have indited them, you will have had a little experience of life under troublesome and perhaps trying conditions. My dear lads, we have all something to learn in the world—patience, self-denial, devotion to our plain duties. Some qualities in some of you are lacking, some too prominent, some need pruning down, others grafting. By this time you have found the Talisman, the *Talisman* for which I sent you; the old Bible, which for years was my constant companion in the wilderness; and from which I learned much. It was hidden, with the deeds you will also find in the box, for safety one winter when we quitted the station, to which I was never permitted to return. The deeds refer to property, the possession of which was in dispute, and they were intrusted to my safe keeping. They refer to land—to the Island of Anticosti, and to some territory in Canada which you will find extremely valuable. Had I been well enough I would have before this have taken steps to claim the land. But then I bethought me of this little scheme, and had determined to send you all out in my service.

"The Bible I wish Arthur to have. It will cheer his despondency when he feels in bad spirits, as it has cheered me. To Bob I leave with Arthur the lands marked A in the plans in the box. To my nephews, Thomas and Cecil, one half share in the other claim, the remaining half claim to be equally divided between George Hamilton and my good young friend Angus Fowler. I shall not live to witness your success; but take with my blessing the legacies here mentioned in addition to all other bequests already made in my will, and only subject to the conditions therein expressed. May God bless and protect you in your journeyings, and whether He permit me or not to see my wishes carried out, I call on you all to observe them, and use the 'treasure' to the advantage of yourselves, your friends, and your poorer brethren. Amen."

Then followed the signature duly witnessed and sealed.

Angus folded up the document; his eyes, as well as those of all the others present, were swimming with tears. No one spoke until Captain Morris, taking off his hat, said:

"God bless him. Can't we just say a prayer for guidance to do as he wished?"

The others had had the same idea, but lacked the moral courage to suggest it. The American had touched the proper chord, which vibrated at his suggestion in all their hearts, as the party stood around the excavation as around a grave. They knelt down.

When this "plain duty" had been accomplished with due reverence and respect by all present, the deeds were examined with much anxiety and no little demonstrativeness.

After the excitement had somewhat subsided, Angus said:

"It is getting late; the tide will help us a little up stream. Shall we proceed to Nor'-west River or return to Rigolette?"

"Let us see all we can," said George; "now we are here. It is not far up, and to-morrow's tide will carry us on our first stage home."

"Home! home! sweet home!" screamed the boys
"There's no place like home."

"We will go up a few miles further nevertheless," decided Angus. "It will be another little experience."

So they sailed up to Nor'-west River, and found another Hudson Bay Company's station. The river here is some hundred yards wide, but, with the addition of several Indian (Nascopie) "lodges," the place resembles Rigolette in general features. The scenery around is, however, very pretty. The river eddying through the forests, the green grass, the wood-clothed hills, the sandy soil, and the smiling water reflecting

all, even to the blue and distant mountains, compose a picture which is as different as possible from the coast scenery.

Nor are signs of contentment and comfort wanting. Domestic animals, sheep and cows, and even the barn-door fowl are seen and heard at North-west River post. Turnips, melons, barley, and welcome cauliflowers salute the pleased eyes of the travellers; while civilized dogs, and some goats, add life to the foreground.

Trees of considerable size and many wild fruits were seen next day when the party took a walk. From here the Hudson's Bay men start for their long and weary march to the west over the great "divide." The river is easy at first, but the subsequent toil is great, for the Grand Fall must be rounded, and many other "portages" made. *Voyageurs* told Angus that the fall is "a thousand feet high," but other evidence leads us to suspect that four hundred feet is nearer the altitude. At anyrate the cataract is stupendous, and after its fall it rushes through a chasm three hundred feet deep for a distance of thirty miles.

"I should like to see that cataract," said Cecil.

"It's two hundred miles away at least," said the voyageur, "and a hard journey. Don't attempt it."

"No," replied Angus. "We will be content with your description of it. Good-bye. *Bon voyage.*"

"*Bon voyage,*" repeated the voyageur. Next day sixteen men started for the West in two boats, and we trust reached their destination in safety.

Then the boat in which our voyagers embarked dropped down stream and reached Rigolette. Thence the transit was made in safety down to the sea. But an incident that occurred on the voyage down threw a light upon the fate of the captain of the *Gannet* and his accomplices.

The Narrows were passed in safety, and the boat was gliding rapidly down, when Tom called the captain's

attention to a mast which was standing in the water. "There's a wreck," he said.

The captain kept away, and in a short time lay close to the wreck. A schooner had foundered apparently. She lay helpless under water on a ledge of rock—fixed; the next tide would probably break her up or entirely submerge her.

"Some fellows have been trying to sail up the Narrows and got foundered," said Angus. "I wish I knew where the crew are. Can they all be drowned?"

"Most likely," replied the captain. "They could never escape the tide once they got caught, poor chaps."

"There is something on the shore yonder," said Arthur. "I believe it's a dead body."

The boat was pulled in, and with an exclamation each member of the party recognized the former Company's agent who had sailed with the captain of the *Gannet*.

"Then that's the *Gannet* yonder," said the captain; "and Joel has made his last cruise. Well, serve him right."

"Oh, Captain Morris!" said Angus.

"Yes, sir. Sorry to offend you. But I say so. He insulted my ship, and this poor thing here was a traitor. They're all dead now, so we'll forgive them. It serves them right!"

But the time warned the explorers that the morning tide would soon be running up again. So the young crew pushed off and pulled hard down; aided by the stream and a slant of wind, the well-found boat managed to reach the *Annie* before the "bore" came up again. The boat was hoisted in, and sail was immediately made.

Three ringing cheers announced to the birds and fishes that the *Annie* was now homeward bound. A parting salute from the loaded gun which Captain Morris had so kindly intended for the *Gannet* was

fired, and startled many other gannets and sea-birds. The echo booms and re-echoes from cliff to cliff. The schooner's head goes round, the sails belly out to the wind; they are off.

Tom and Bob side by side take off their caps and make low bows to Labrador.

"Good-bye, old gray-face!" said Tom.

"Good-bye, old treasure-ground!" said Bob.

"After all, we have had a capital time," said Cecil.

"Splendid!" said Arthur. "I wonder whether the run home will be as good. Fancy old Barum again after Rigolette and the Esquimaux!"

"And the whales and seals!" added George.

"And the icebergs and bears!" said Angus.

"And all the 'larks' and puffins!" suggested the captain.

"Yes," sighed Tom; "if it wasn't for *home* I declare I should like to stay here longer."

The others laughed, and then the captain suggested supper and a little champagne to drink "success" to the run home.

During the night the wind got up and made a rough sea; but the schooner rushed along merrily past islands, and more islands, rocks, and more rocks, all covered with foam, and round which the great waves dashed and swirled, or threw upon them immense jets many feet high.

Away, away, with now a following breeze direct for Belle Isle. No stopping yet. Away, away, into the Strait; and at length, after nearly four days' sailing, pitching, tossing, and illness, the *Annie* rounded Chateau Island and cast anchor in Henlev Harbour.

CHAPTER XXVII

HENLEY HARBOUR—CURIOUS ROCKS—RETURN TO HAL-
FAX—HOMEWARD BOUND—BACK TO BRISTOL—HOME
AGAIN!—CONCLUSION.



AUGUST had closed now, and a long stay in the Harbour was imprudent. But the boys were determined to see all they could here, and a few days were consumed in exploring the neighbourhood of Chateau Island and the "castle," under the very walls of which the schooner was lying.

Henley Harbour is merely one arm of the bay to which the "castle" gives its name, "Chateau." The history of the bay and the narrative of the associations of the place occupy considerable space in Tom's diary. But we need not quote his by no means uninteresting notes concerning the settlements, and the contests waged here by English, French, and Americans. The French Acadians landed here; and the party from the *Annie* explored the old fortification and rambled about the broken walls, which were then rapidly crumbling to decay.

They also visited the curious rocks and made several sketches along the coast. The "castle" is simply basaltic rock, and presents a very curious appearance. The wall rises up for some two hundred feet and affords a fine

prospect. But in all this the lads only took a limited interest. The season was dying out; vessels were daily perceived running home. The prospects of a bad passage were becoming more and more visible. "Let us be off!"

"Yes," said Angus, "let us go. We have done all we can. There is a long voyage yet before us. What do you say, Captain Morris?"

"Well, it's about time. September, you see, is getting on; and by the time you've got back to Halifax, and got your traps on board the 'liner,' and arrived in England, the Christmas pudding will be getting ready, I daresay."

"Ours is made already," said Cecil. "But we want to be home in November, if we can. So let us go. Homeward bound!—hurrah!"

The cheer was echoed, and next day the *Annie* sailed merrily away, as the boys waved a long adieu to Henley Harbour. "Farewell, farewell!"

There was a little feeling of sadness as the *Annie* ran down the Straits. The wishes of the late Captain Wood regarding the continuance of the trip had been anticipated, owing to the little error in copying the latitude and longitude, and to the necessity in the first instance of running so far north and getting into the Straits. So all the party felt they had done all that could be expected of them. Not only had they found the Talisman, but they had really obtained valuable claims, which, with the money already left them, would make them all independent.

But this was by no means their only idea. They all felt that the spirit of the will should be observed as well as the letter. The lads had each determined on a profession by the time the *Annie* reached Halifax; and we may so far continue the record as to say that Bob chose the navy, and is now in the Mediterranean (though bearing his real name, which is not

Wood, as we have called him). Tom has gone into the army, and is fortunate enough to be serving as brigade-major at one of our great stations. Cecil, dear, kind "Master Sarcil," went to China, and subsequently entered the Church. Arthur, no longer the desponding, selected the medical profession. He is now married—the only member of the whole party, except Angus, who has taken matrimonial honours—and in a good practice in his native county.

But to resume.

The *Annie*, soon to regain her old name of *Walrus*, made rather bad weather of it as she drove home with reefs in her mainsail. The Straits were rough, the ocean was rougher; and by the time the schooner reached the shelter of Halifax harbour there was scarcely a glass or a basin unbroken or uncracked on board. Sea-sickness had been very prevalent. Even Angus had succumbed once, in a short and choppy sea, for a few hours. But when the gale abated and the sun came out, and the sea resumed its tranquillity usual under such circumstances, the boys began to build castles in the air and to speculate on the future with all their youthful ardour.

We have already recorded the results. We may only add here, that the Canadian "claims" in the north-west have proved valuable. The Anticosti question is not decided, but steps were lately taken concerning it, and it will be doubtless concluded satisfactorily.

Halifax again! The whole party were on deck when the *Annie* ran into the harbour. It seemed almost like home after all the dreary coast which had been so long under the lee. Yet Halifax is many hundreds of miles from Barum on the Taw. However, cables and mail steamers quickly bridge the distance; and a telegram was despatched to Pilton which cheered

the home party in a manner that can be readily guessed.

There were letters waiting too, and papers from home too—budgets of letters full of all kinds of welcome details even down to the hens and ducks. These little things—these tiny items of news—bind the thin heart-threads to home more than anything else. Politics, great events, and even county news may be gathered from the papers. But domestic chat, the birds, the bees, the garden, the daily details which enter so largely into English family life—the local chatter and the loving, tender thoughts—all these make up the sum of letters welcome to our absent friends. Never mind how small the matter, so that it treats of home, it will be welcome.

So the young adventurers found their letters. It was perfectly astonishing how much Annie Tracey—who as a rule disliked writing—had to tell Angus. Her ideas rapidly developed under the genial influence of the sunshine of her heart, and Angus got the benefit, as did the others also. "Dear old Annie," said Cecil, "she writes like a special correspondent. Nellie, too, is quite a scribe."

Then came the settling-day with Captain Morris, who was induced to accept a handsome ring and a binocular glass as a little tribute to his seamanship. Each of the crew received a bonus—and these, with the seals' and other skins which had been found, and a "take" of fish which the captain had made at Henley Harbour, gave all hands a good recompense for the expedition. When the young men, each carrying some trophy, left the schooner, the crew, led by the captain, gave them three hearty cheers, which resounded along the water and the wharf.

"I'm leaving thee in sorrow, *Annie*," muttered Bob as he made his way to the hotel. "Tom, old chap, we have had a real good time, and have all profited by

our experience. I shall never make a bad pun again!"

"We have much to be thankful for," said George, "and certainly not the least for that change in you. But, seriously, we have each had a lesson, and let us trust we will not forget the TALISMAN."

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Two days afterwards the party were in New York. Some days after that they were on board the White Star mail steamer *Britannia*, which carried them across the "pond" at a rattling pace. The Fastnet was passed in less than eight days, and Queenstown quickly reached. Reminiscences of the "mysterious stranger" of the outward trip caused some merriment, and at Queenstown the young explorers disembarked. They subsequently took the steamer which rejoiced, and may still rejoice, in the name of the *Prussischen Adler* to Bristol, where they arrived at the "haven under the hill" safe and sound one October night.

The journey to Barnstaple was concluded next day, and the long-wished-for meeting took place at last.

Need we tell of the greetings, the embraces, the inquiries, the tears, the rippling laughter, the general wonderment expressed at each and every individual and circumstance? Need we enlarge upon Mr. and Mrs. Tracey's joy and thankfulness, on the greetings of friends, on the children's delight, and on Annie's fond welcome to Angus? No, we can all picture the meeting of the young people, the affectionate greetings of Nellie and George, the complete and utter happiness of the entire household.

The great expedition had been accomplished. The trial "in the fire" had purified all the already good metal submitted to the test. The Talisman still exists

—where? In the first place in all their hearts, but invisibly. Visibly in the study—the little private study—of Angus Fowler. Why? We will tell you.

Some few months after Angus returned he accepted an appointment in Liverpool in connection with the mercantile marine. He is secretary to a board where his naval knowledge and experience are valuable.

There, in Liverpool, where his avocations called him, he purchased a home and furnished it. Very many friends made him presents, and the Traceys took a great interest in the house. Annie particularly did so. Then one December morning Angus came down to Barnstaple, and there was a grand wedding! Annie, looking prettier than ever, beaming with happiness, left Pilton that same afternoon for South Devon with her husband Angus Fowler, to love, honour, and obey, till death do them part! He had won his prize and the Talisman!

For Arthur handed the Bible to Annie as a wedding present. In it are recorded the date of the marriage, and underneath are two names, a girl's name and a boy's name. May they live and grow up as true and steadfast as their parents!

The lads dispersed in time, and the Tracey family quitted Pilton.

George and Nellie Hamilton live in London, and are still reckoned amongst our dear friends. We have rather lost sight of the others, for the great world swallows us all up so quickly in its vortex of business, and even in its pleasures at times. But they all live and are happy—happy, I hope, as I am, when I look back on the past and recall the merry faces, the hearty hand-shake, the kindly smile, which bade us welcome to the Traceys' home. "Into each life some rain must fall," and there have been drops in ours since then—some big drops; but the sunshine has come



again, and will remain, we trust, with them and us all.

From Angus and Annie I have not lately heard, but with them, and particularly with her, my older friend, there will always remain a tender memory, and a happy reminiscence of this

SEARCH FOR THE TALISMAN.

THE END.